

# **The unpaid care work - paid work connection**

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**Policy Integration and Statistics Department  
International Labour Office  
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to stimulate discussion and obtain comments



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*Abstract:* Part I of the paper examines the interface and trade-offs between paid and unpaid work, including unpaid care work, while Part II identifies data gaps and proposes further research and analysis. Specifically, the paper focuses on women's and men's division of labour between paid work and unpaid care work and its effects on gender equality with respect to decent work outcomes, and one's ability and power to make and act on choices; its interconnection with individual and family poverty; and on how economic and social policies and institutions influence women's options by reducing or increasing the burden of unpaid care work. Unpaid care work shapes the ability, duration and types of paid work that can be undertaken. As it does not offer monetary remuneration, it reduces the exercise of "voice" over decision-making and impacts on one's ability to accumulate savings and assets. Being regarded a woman's "natural" work - performed in the "private" sphere of the family - unpaid care work hides away its economic dimensions and contributions; and being undervalued, it assigns paid social reproduction (care) workers to jobs that are presumed to be unskilled, with low pay, slender options for promotion and scant social protection. Most importantly, unpaid care work entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that go unrecognized, imposing a systematic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle. These hidden subsidies signal the existence of power relations between men and women. But also, they connect the "private" worlds of households and families with the "public" spheres of markets and the state in exploitative ways. It is important to shed light on these interconnections and draw attention to a pervasive form of inequality, in ways that motivate public dialogue and action on behalf of policy makers, in the hope that change is possible.

*JEL classification:* B54; E24; H50; I30; J10; J22.

*Résumé:* La partie I du document examine l'interface et les choix possibles entre travail rémunéré et travail non rémunéré, y compris les travaux domestiques non rémunérés. La partie II recense les lacunes dans les données existantes et propose de nouvelles pistes de recherche et d'analyse. Le document aborde plus particulièrement la répartition du travail rémunéré et des travaux domestiques non rémunérés entre les hommes et les femmes et les effets de cette répartition sur l'égalité entre hommes et femmes en matière de travail décent, mais également la capacité et le pouvoir de chacun de choisir et d'agir selon ses choix, l'interconnexion de cette répartition avec la pauvreté des individus et des familles et la manière dont les politiques et les institutions socio-économiques influencent les options offertes aux femmes en réduisant ou en augmentant la charge des travaux domestiques non rémunérés. Les travaux domestiques conditionnent la capacité à exercer un travail rémunéré, mais également le type et la durée des emplois rémunérés occupés. L'absence de rémunération réduit les possibilités de faire «entendre sa voix» lors de prises de décisions et affecte également la capacité d'une personne à accumuler des économies et des biens. Considérés comme des travaux revenant «naturellement» aux femmes, les travaux domestiques non rémunérés - effectués dans la sphère familiale - cachent leur dimension économique et leur contribution à l'économie. De plus, la déconsidération dont ces travaux sont l'objet a pour effet d'affecter par reproduction sociale les personnes effectuant ce genre de travaux à des emplois rémunérés supposés non qualifiés, peu rétribués, aux perspectives de promotion limitées et procurant une protection sociale insuffisante. Plus important encore est le fait que les travaux domestiques non rémunérés entraînent un transfert systémique et non reconnu de subventions dissimulées vers le reste de l'économie, imposant ainsi aux femmes un impôt systématique sur le temps pendant leur vie entière. Ces subventions dissimulées révèlent l'existence de rapports de force entre les hommes et les femmes. Mais elles établissent également un lien entre le monde «privé» des foyers et des familles avec les sphères «publiques» des marchés et de l'état sur un mode d'exploitation. Il est important d'apporter un éclairage sur ces interconnexions et d'attirer l'attention sur une forme d'inégalité largement répandue, afin d'engendrer un débat public et des actions de la part des décideurs politiques, dans l'espoir d'un changement possible.

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*Resumen:* En la Parte I del documento se examinan la interfaz y la elección entre el trabajo remunerado y el trabajo no remunerado, con inclusión de las tareas de asistencia no remuneradas, mientras que en la Parte II se señalan las deficiencias en los datos y se proponen nuevas investigaciones y análisis. Concretamente el documento se centra en la división del trabajo de mujeres y hombres entre trabajo remunerado y tareas asistenciales no remuneradas y sus efectos en la igualdad de género con respecto a los resultados del trabajo decente, y la capacidad y el poder de cada uno de efectuar y aplicar las opciones realizadas. También se enfocan la interconexión con la pobreza de las personas y las familias y la manera en que las políticas sociales y económicas y las instituciones inciden en las opciones de las mujeres reduciendo o incrementando el peso de las tareas de asistencia no remuneradas. Las tareas de asistencia no remuneradas determinan la capacidad, la duración y los tipos de trabajo remunerado que pueden efectuarse. Al no ofrecer una compensación monetaria, dichas labores reducen la posibilidad de expresar su opinión en relación con la toma de decisiones y los efectos en la capacidad individual de ahorrar y acumular activos. Considerado como una tarea "natural" de la mujer, que se desempeña en la esfera "privada" de la familia, el trabajo de asistencia no remunerado oculta su dimensión económica y sus contribuciones. Además, al ser subvaluado, destina a los trabajadores remunerados de asistencia social a empleos, supuestamente no calificados, con sueldos bajos, mínimas posibilidades de promoción y escasa protección social. Lo que es más importante, las tareas de asistencia no remuneradas conllevan una transferencia sistémica de subsidios ocultos al resto de la economía que no se reconoce, imponiendo un impuesto sistemático a las mujeres a lo largo de su ciclo de vida. Estos subsidios ocultos señalan la existencia de relaciones de poder entre hombres y mujeres, pero conectan también el mundo "privado" de los hogares y las familias con las esferas "públicas" del mercado y el Estado en términos de explotación. Es esencial arrojar luz respecto de estas interconexiones y llamar la atención sobre una forma omnipresente de desigualdad, de modo que se propicie el diálogo público y la acción en nombre de los encargados de formular políticas, con la esperanza de que pueda producirse un cambio.

*Clasificación JEL:* B54; E24; H50; I30; J10; J22.

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# The unpaid care work - paid work connection

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# The unpaid care work - paid work connection

## Introduction

Since the 1960s, a substantial amount of research has been undertaken to take stock of the differences in the socio-economic status between men and women. At the same time, mobilization and awareness-building culminated in international fora and, under the auspices of the United Nations, many governments committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. To document the progress made (or lack of), new conceptual frameworks were developed that made evident the need for gender-sensitive data collection processes. Thus came the great push forward for data gathering that allowed tracking of differences between girls and boys, women and men at the national level for both developing and developed countries.

In the decades that followed, research findings pointed out that ameliorating gender disparities in paid and unpaid work, a goal in its own right, is a contributing factor to promoting gender equality and also pro-poor growth, social cohesion, and improvements in overall human development.<sup>1</sup> As a result, policy attention and resources were devoted to address gaps in health, education, labour markets, labour rights, and access to credit and markets. These have been important initiatives and rising female labour force participation rates provide encouraging testimony to that end.

Progress made notwithstanding, gaps remain. Women are still overrepresented among the underpaid and unprotected workers around the world. Despite their contributions to the economy, returns to education are lower for women, gender-based wage differentials persist, and market segmentation and occupational segregation further exacerbate inequalities. Last but not least, gender disparities in the division of labour between paid and unpaid work also persist, with men spending more of their work time in remunerative employment and women performing most of the unpaid work.<sup>2</sup> It is this gap that constitutes the focus of the present paper. Time-use survey data<sup>3</sup> reveal this to be the case in the North and in the global South among women that participate in the labour market and those that are “inactive.”

Unpaid work is interlinked with the location individuals occupy in paid work through many channels: it (a) shapes the ability, duration, and types of paid work that can be undertaken and therefore limits access to existing and potential collective action processes and social security; (b) does not offer monetary remuneration, which reduces the exercise of “voice” over decision making and ability to accumulate savings and assets; (c) as in many societies, it is regarded a woman’s “natural” work, performed in the “private” sphere of the family and therefore it essentializes this work and strips it of its socio-economic dimensions and contributions; and (d) assigns paid social reproduction (care) workers to jobs that are presumed to be unskilled, with low pay, slender options for promotion, and scant social protection.

Taking care of one’s own household and family members’ needs may be a labour of love, but it is also a labour of sorrow and drudgery. Unpaid care work in particular, though embedded in feelings of obligation and commitment to others’ well-being, is also rooted in patriarchal structures that interact with the rest of the economy in ways that need to gain

<sup>1</sup> Jahan (2005); Çagatay and Ertürk (2004); Lustig et al. (2002); Klasen (1999).

<sup>2</sup> An excellent introduction to the topic can be found in D. Budlender’s (2002), *Why Should We Care About Unpaid Care Work?*

<sup>3</sup> We will discuss time-use surveys in detail in a later section, as they are key to gathering data on unpaid work.

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more visibility. The male-breadwinner/female-caregiver polar representation perpetuates a “gendering” ideology that distorts and limits human potential and narrows the range of experiences of “being” and “doing” for men and women. If we are to make further progress towards gender equality we have to address the fact that it is neither “normal” nor “natural” for women to be performing most of the unpaid labour.

Most importantly, unpaid care work entails a systemic transfer of hidden subsidies to the rest of the economy that go unrecognized, imposing a systematic time-tax on women throughout their life cycle. These hidden subsidies signal the existence of power relations between men and women; also, they connect the “private” worlds of households and families with the “public” spheres of markets and the state in exploitative ways. We must shed light on these interconnections in ways that motivate public dialogue and action on behalf of policy makers to remedy this phenomenon. The present paper joins existing efforts that aim to draw attention to this problem, a pervasive form of inequality, in the hope that progress and change is possible.

Part I of this document examines various aspects of women’s and men’s division of labour between paid work and unpaid work and consists of seven sections. Section 1 introduces the concept of unpaid work and contextualizes the use of “unpaid care work” in this paper. Section 2 elaborates on the relationship of unpaid work to the economy at the aggregate level. Section 3 is concerned with the paid/unpaid work division of labour between men and women. Section 4 discusses domestic work and the global care chain. Section 5 looks at poverty and unpaid work. In the context of unpaid care work, in Section 6 we consider the role of the state as it addresses issues of unemployment, poverty, and social care. Finally, we conclude Part I with a discussion on the importance of time-use survey data in Section 7. Part II identifies recommendations for selected issues that warrant further research and analysis. The tables and figures included in the text present selected statistics.

## **Part I: Gender division of labour: paid and unpaid work**

### **1. Concept and purview of unpaid work**

Analytically speaking, people allocate their time to activities that can be classified as paid work, unpaid work, and no work. Leaving aside sleep time, the concept of “no work” is commonly understood as consisting of free time spent on personal care and leisure activities. A clear but often-neglected distinction must be drawn, of course, between “no work” as voluntarily chosen free time and “no work” as the outcome of enforced inactivity due to chronic lack of employment opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

Paid work refers to time contracted out that receives remuneration. Work arrangements and the extent to which paid work is performed under decent conditions show extreme variations, with notable consequences on workers. Informality and lack of decent work conditions have received considerable attention worldwide by government and nongovernment organizations, trade unions, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), as well as academic researchers. Labour market segmentation, wage differentials, unemployment, and labour force participation rates are also relatively well investigated subjects and national labour statistics departments routinely collect data on these issues. Unpaid work has received less attention and we now turn to this.

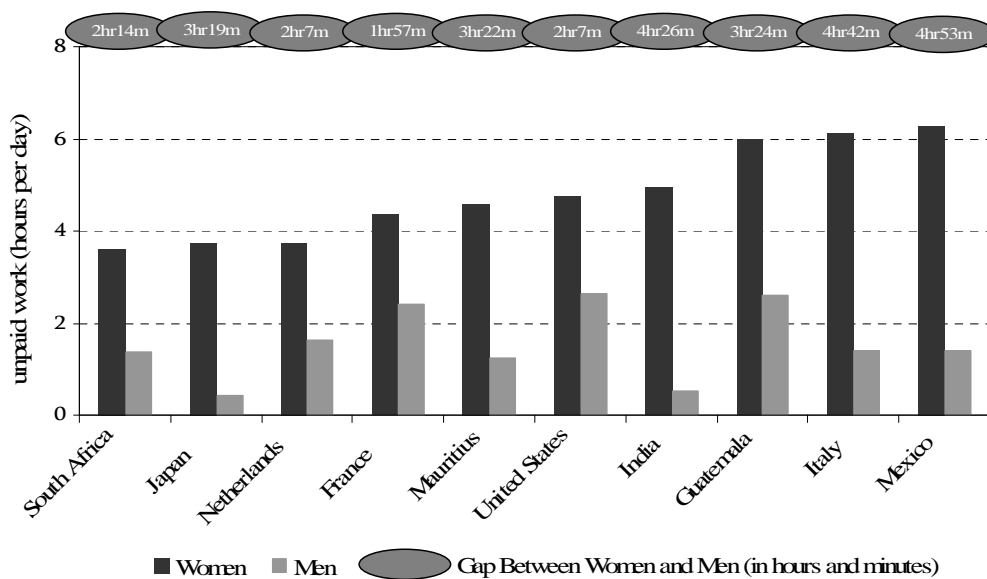
<sup>4</sup> Traditional economics presumed that within the span of a day what is not accounted for by work-time is leisure (Pigou, 1920; Becker, 1965; Linder, 1970). Heterodox economic traditions warn that “no work” can also be the outcome of social exclusion from paid work, in which case a person is rendered forcefully inactive for short or long periods of time (Vickery, 1977; Minsky, 1986).

“Unpaid work” includes all non-remunerated work activities and it is safe to say that it lacks social recognition. The overall division of time between paid and unpaid work depends upon many factors including age, gender, type of household structure, social class, geographic location, and presence of children, to name a few. The very young, those that can purchase substitutes in the market, those with few or no children and non-single heads of households devote less of their time overall to unpaid tasks.

Equally important is the level of development of the economy, as it affects not only the duration, but also the distribution, of time between paid/unpaid work and the allocation of unpaid time among a variety of activities. In wealthier countries, larger segments of the population have access to paid jobs. Among those that work part-time or not at all, as one would expect, more time is devoted to subsistence production or fetching wood, for example. Finally, public sector infrastructure and state provisioning regimes determine social service delivery, which in itself plays a role in the specific allocation of time among a variety of unpaid tasks. Universal free access to health services, child and elder care, and water delivery to one’s doorstep reduces the amount of time needed for taking care of family/household members at home or gathering and transporting water, for instance.

Nonetheless, and despite the above mentioned differentiating elements, a most striking and well-known feature of unpaid work is that women, as compared to men, perform it disproportionately in developing and developed countries alike. Figure 1-1 shows that the gender gap ranges from two hours to almost five hours.

**Figure 1-1. Time spent on unpaid work: Selected developing and OECD countries**



Source: Author’s tabulations; data from UNDP (2006) and ECLAC (2007)

In the next sections we will elaborate on several dimensions of unpaid work and their implications for men and women. As the term “unpaid work” is unwittingly conflated with non-production work, and at other times with performing production, but not market-oriented work, some conceptual clarifications are in order and we turn to this issue first. To complicate matters, unpaid work, unpaid care work, household production, and household reproduction are used interchangeably. It is useful to devote a bit of time then to clarify these terms and, in the process, to critically examine the meanings attached to them.

We begin with the question of whether unpaid work is *economic work* or *non-economic work*. According to the United Nations System of National Accounts of 1993 (SNA), which provides the conceptual framework that sets the international statistical standard for the measurement and classification of economic activities,<sup>5</sup> some unpaid work activities are deemed “economic work” and, much like paid work, are considered to belong within the “SNA production boundary.” Other unpaid work activities are classified as “non-economic.”

SNA 1993 convention indicates that the former (unpaid *economic work*) activities be measured and included in annual estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). These pertain to: (a) production of fixed assets for household use, such as building a house; (b) subsistence production work, such as crop cultivation, animal husbandry, forestry, and fishery for own use; (c) collection of basic necessities, like water and fuel wood from common or private lands; (d) collection of raw materials for *income* generating activities like crafts and other manufacturing; and (e) activities such as unpaid family work for crop production that *reaches the market*, as well as animal grazing, agro-processing, and food processing *for sale*. Accordingly, unpaid economic work consists of activities in procuring inputs and producing for own use, as well as for the market. In practice, data collection gaps make measurement and inclusion of many of the abovementioned activities in National Income and Product Accounts very difficult.

Other types of unpaid work are deemed by the SNA 1993 to be “non-economic” and are relegated outside the SNA production boundary. Non-SNA unpaid work, often referred to as work that falls “outside the SNA production boundary,” consists of household maintenance, cleaning, washing, cooking, shopping, providing care for infants and children (active and passive care), care for the permanently ill or temporarily sick (as well as for older relatives and the disabled), and all volunteer work for community services. Recognizing these as contributing to society but not to the “economy,” the SNA recommendation is that parallel (satellite) accounts to the National Income and Product Accounts (GDP) are constructed. Table 1-1 shows a schematic representation of the relationship between paid/unpaid work and SNA/Non-SNA work. To briefly reiterate, work that is *unpaid* is at times performed with a view to produce for the *market*, as in cell (B); it is considered *production* work by SNA, as in cells (B+C), whether it is destined for the market as in cell (B) or for own use within the household cell (C).

**Table 1-1. The overlap of paid/unpaid work and SNA/Non-SNA work**

<b>SNA work (production boundary)</b>	(A) Paid work(for the market)	(B) Unpaid work (for the market)	(C) Unpaid work for the household (non-market)
<b>Non-SNA work (outside the production boundary)</b>			(D) Unpaid work (non-market, household maintenance, care work, and volunteer work)

Influenced by the abovementioned statistical classification, the term “unpaid care work” has come to signify the sum of childcare, eldercare, and care of the sick and permanently ill. Accordingly, these are treated as self-contained, well-delineated activities performed by household members for other household members. But this language/terminology may be problematic as it inadvertently creates some misrepresentations. There are two challenging issues here.

<sup>5</sup> It consists of an integrated set of macroeconomic accounts, balance sheets, and tables based on internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications, and accounting rules that delineate the market economy and provides details for constructing satellite accounts of unpaid work. For details, see: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/sna1993/introduction.asp>

First, the assumption is that unpaid work provides *care* when the activity is devoted to those who cannot care for themselves due to their age (too young or too old to care for oneself) or due to a temporary or permanent ailment/disability, i.e., feeding a child, bathing a sick person, cleaning the room of an elderly person, etc. Yet, to feed a child, one must prepare the food. Furthermore, unpaid work that provides a sanitary and healthy environment for everyone in the family irrespective of age and health status, that transforms raw ingredients to consumable cooked food, and provides for clean and ironed clothing for all members of the household is not considered care.<sup>6</sup> Calling it anything, but unpaid care work obscures the fact that the daily social reproduction of all members of our society and the generational reproduction and upbringing of children is achieved through unpaid care work.

The second issue relates to access to “intermediate inputs” that are necessary for unpaid care provisioning. Across and within countries, households differ substantially in terms of the required “household overhead time,” e.g. the minimum number of hours a household must spend to transform raw materials to consumable goods and to provide a clean and healthy environment (Harvey and Taylor 2000). For example, the time women allocate to fetching water, a vital input for all sorts of unpaid work (from production of staple food, to processing of food, to cleaning) ranges from zero minutes per day in developed countries, to thirty-two minutes in rural Madagascar, to over an hour in Benin (table 1-2).

**Table 1-2. Time spent fetching water in Benin and Madagascar (in minutes)**

	Benin (1998)			Madagascar (2001)		
	Women	Men	Women/Men (%)	Women	Men	Women/Men (%)
Urban	16	6	267	16	10	160
Rural	62	16	388	32	8	400

Source: Kes and Swaminathan (2006)

We conclude this section with a remark we will return to in Section 5 when we discuss unpaid work and poverty. It is not only the length of time devoted to unpaid work that puts women at a disadvantage. It is also the types of activities and nature of the tasks that create (and reveal) further inequalities among women and between households. The exact duration of “household overhead time” and its distribution among tasks is determined, to a large degree, by income levels and availability of household appliances. The first allows for purchase of intermediate goods and services, and the second for use of technologies that reduce unpaid work time. It has been shown that the distribution of time allocated to unpaid work across non-poor and poor households shows a lot of variation (Hirway, 2005; Blackden and Wodon, 2006).

Equally important is the existence of social and physical public infrastructure, which provides access to critical inputs such as water, sanitation, adequate health care services, and energy resources. Existing time-use information reveals that the pattern of time distribution to access such vital inputs matters a lot from a gender perspective as more unpaid work is needed to fill in infrastructural gaps. This, as mentioned earlier, implies that longer hours in household overhead production are necessary for poor households, which further exacerbates the burden of poor women.

<sup>6</sup> Harvey and Mukhopadhyay (2007: 60) make use of a more meaningful term, that of “*committed*” time, which refers to total time undertaken to maintain one’s home and one’s family. Adopted from Aas (1982) they identify “four main time categories: *contracted time*, *committed time*, *necessary time*, and *free time*.” *Contracted time* is time that, by agreement, has been set aside to undertake paid work or education. One is obligated by the nature of the employment or educational contract to allocate time to these activities as appropriate. *Committed time* refers to time undertaken to maintain one’s home and one’s family. *Necessary time* is time required to maintain oneself in terms of eating, sleeping, bathing, etc. *Free time* refers to the remaining time that is left when contracted, committed, and necessary time is subtracted from 24-hours of the day.

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An expanded and more appropriate usage of *unpaid care work* (or some other category perhaps) ought to then be constructed around the concept of unpaid social reproduction work; it would consist of all unpaid non-SNA work *and* those parts of unpaid SNA work that are necessary in securing and processing the intermediate inputs for the daily and generational reproduction of people. This category would then consist of the direct unpaid care work plus the indirect care work. What it would exclude is family unpaid work that produces goods for sale in the market. Such a measure would make evident differences in necessary unpaid time between household types, as well as among men and women.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Unpaid work and the macroeconomy

Among the contributions of gender-aware economic analysis is the re-examination of the function households play at the macroeconomic level of investigation. For our purposes it is worth noting that, traditionally, households have been presumed to supply labour to the business sector in return for income, which they either consume or save. This, as feminist economists have pointed out, is a rather limited view, as it conceals the fact that households are also linked to the rest of the economy through their *production capacity*<sup>8</sup> in so far as they produce goods and provide services through unpaid work. Excluding the non-monetized part of the economy is even more problematic for developing countries where fully marketized activities comprise a small fraction of the economy. We wish to highlight three aspects here: (a) the fact that GDP should be expanded to include the value of economic unpaid work by including the SNA 1933 guidelines, as well as the portion deemed “non-economic” contribution; (b) the link of unpaid work to the marketized part of the economy; and (c) the link of unpaid work to state provisioning of public goods and service delivery.

### 2.1 Expanding the measurement of GDP

Our starting point is that household production expands the available pool of necessities human beings rely on for their physical and social reproduction. At one level then, household unpaid (care) work supplements the goods and services bought with income from the market and those made available through public-sector provisioning. Time-use survey data and the construction of parallel satellite accounts have made the contribution of household production transparent.<sup>9</sup> For countries with available time-use data, satellite

<sup>7</sup> It is this notional category that we use here when we refer to unpaid care work, recognizing that the use of the term is different from that of the SNA 1933, and in so doing we agree with the approach taken in the ECLAC (2007) document prepared by Sonia Montaña.

<sup>8</sup> *New Household Economics* (Becker, 1981) introduced to neoclassical microeconomics the idea that households also engage in production of goods and services. This field of study is predicated on unrealistic and gender-blind assumptions about preferences, behaviour, and choices; the further presupposition of similitude in regards to regulating principles of the institution of the market and the institution of the family renders its findings quite problematic. For a discussion, see Ferber and Nelson (2000).

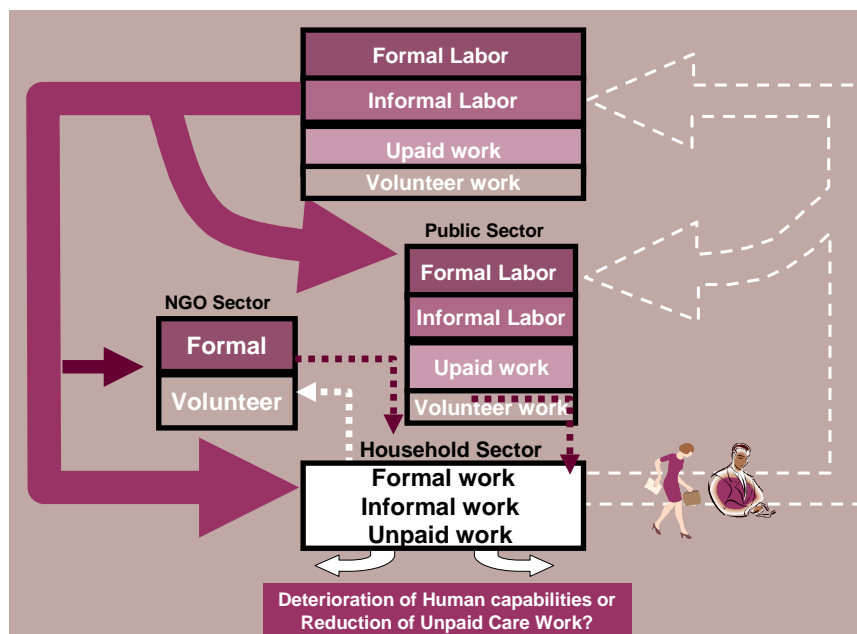
<sup>9</sup> The measurement of unpaid work was one of the major challenges to governments that came out of the Third UN World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, as well as the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The Platform for Action that developed out of Beijing called for national and international statistical organizations to measure unpaid work and reflect its value in satellite accounts to the GDP. Few countries have developed full accounts though.

accounts estimates range from an additional 20 per cent to 60 per cent of GDP,<sup>10</sup> highlighting the contribution of this hidden sector of the economy and, in particular, women's contributions to economic well-being.

But even more important than assigning monetary value to the contributions of household production, awareness of unpaid labour's value leads to the recognition that the three sectors – households, markets, and government (and for some developing countries, the NGO sector) – are structurally interlinked at the economic level. Accepting such a vision implies that while investigating questions related to growth, as well as fiscal, monetary, international trade, and financial sector policies, the household *production* sector should not be viewed as an add-on or afterthought, but rather as one of the fundamental building blocks.<sup>11</sup> From a policy point of view, how people divide their time between paid and unpaid work ought to be used to understand the impact of macro policies on those performing unpaid work, as well as those that operate mostly within formal markets.

A gender-aware vision proposes that studying the economy entails specifying the processes that take place not only within and between the marketized parts of the economy and the government sector, but also those related to the non-monetized household sector. Figure 2-1 shows a revised view of labour flows in the economy.

**Figure 2-1. Unpaid works and the macroeconomy**



Note: Original graphic design is from E. Gomez Luna, "Unpaid Work and the System of National Accounts," Conference on "Unpaid Work: Gender, Poverty, and the MDGs," The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College, October 3–4, 2005.

<sup>10</sup> For Canada, it is estimated at more than 45 per cent of GDP (Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, 2007); for the United States, 42 per cent of GDP. Japan ranges from 15 to 23 per cent and for the Philippines 38 per cent for the year 1997 (APEC, 1999); for Mexico and Nicaragua the figures for the years 2002 and 1998 are 21.6 per cent and 30 per cent of GDP, respectively (ECLAC, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> See *World Development*, special issue on Gender, Adjustment, and Development, Dec. 1995 and *World Development*, special issue on Growth, Trade, Finance and Gender Inequalities, July 2000.

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## 2.2 Unpaid work as a subsidy to the marketized part of the economy

Unpaid work activities entail everyday routine household maintenance work, such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, doing the laundry, caring for children, etc. Viewed from the point of view of classical economics, this work lowers the cost of labour; at the macro level this allows for a smaller wage fund and thus, a larger pool of profits, which facilitates the process of accumulation at any given time. Unpaid time spent on these activities can then be thought of as a “subsidy” to the business sector, as a transfer, a “gift” if you may, from one institution – the household/family – to the institution of the market.<sup>12</sup> That unpaid work may be important at a personal level, both to the giver and to the receiver, does not alter the fact that in its absence, in order to maintain the same standard of living for employees and their families a higher real wage would be necessary, with consequences for cost structures and wage-profit rates. At the same time, the “subsidies” unpaid work provides result in lower overall levels of labour force participation, income that could have been generated and lower levels of effective demand for goods and services that could be providing employment and generating further economic activity, especially in employment-intensive sectors.

A recent study on selected Latin American countries shows that over half of the women aged 20 to 24 stated their responsibilities at home as *the main reason* for not seeking a job in the labour market (ECLAC, 2007). This group is larger than those unable to find jobs due to lack of education. The study also reports that having someone in the household engaged exclusively in housework (i.e. another relative or domestic worker) does not have much impact on the amount of time that men spend on unpaid domestic work, but it has a major impact on women who report a positive effect on time spent on other activities, including work in the labour market. The study validates the fact that women’s domestic unpaid work forms a barrier in seeking or keeping a paid job.

## 2.3 Unpaid work as a subsidy to state provisioning

The provisioning of a different linkage of unpaid work and the rest of the economy exists through its connection to public sector goods provisioning. For example, unpaid work provides care to the homebound, chronically ill, or those in need of protracted treatment; care is provided in hospitals due to lack of nurse-aides, sanitation personnel, cooks, etc., or at home due to shortened hospital stays dictated by structural adjustment policies of the late 1980s and 1990s. Time-use data and satellite accounts allow for estimations of the volume of unpaid work directed to the provisioning of goods and service delivery that the public sector should be making available: health, education, transportation, water, sanitation, and childcare. It is time spent performing unpaid work in these areas that we will refer to as “subsidies” to *public-sector provisioning*. Included in these activities are the delivery of raw foodstuff, cooking, serving and cleaning up for (school) children’s nutrition enhancement programs, fetching and carrying water, fossil fuels for sanitation and energy use in households, and childcare and eldercare provisioning for one’s own family and community, to give just some examples.

This work places an enormous time-tax on some people asymmetrically – particularly on women, and especially on poor women and children in developing countries – which limits

<sup>12</sup> Antonella Picchio (2003) and the 1970s discussion on the productive/unproductive nature of reproductive labour.



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other aspects of social engagement.<sup>13</sup> In some cases, it reduces the time spent in self-employment or market participation, a case in point is taking care of HIV/AIDS patients in sub-Saharan Africa (Akintola, 2004). In other cases it limits involvement in political processes, in attending school and medical appointments, skill upgrading, or artistic expression. At other times it reduces leisure and time available for self-care and sleep. In times of financial crisis, as in Argentina in 2001, as women increased their time for pay, the slack of unpaid work was picked up by elderly women (Esquivel, 2006). This can lead to social exclusion, time poverty, and depletion of human capabilities.<sup>14</sup> Internalized as one's "destiny," the inviolable obligations of unpaid work deprive some of their "rights" and citizenship by *de facto* segregation.

We have argued that from an economy-wide point of view, unpaid care work fills in *infrastructural gaps* in that it "subsidizes" public-sector provisioning of goods and services. We must keep in mind though that women are not a homogeneous group and therefore their engagement with unpaid work is quite varied. Creation of public assets that facilitate provisioning of drinking water and construction of feeder roads can alleviate burdens by increasing productivity and reducing the time spent on unpaid work in rural areas and urban slums (Hirway and Terhal, 1994; Hirway, 2006). In other instances interventions are needed to promote gender equality by allowing women to devote more time to higher productivity jobs in the labour market. Yet in other cases the issue is to create appropriate social/institutional infrastructure to better allow for reconciling paid work and unpaid work obligations for the population in general and women in particular.

From a policy point of view, being viewed as work that is not related directly to the rest of the economy suggests that addressing unpaid care work can be treated as an island to itself. Caring for adults and raising children can be seen as simply a family affair, effectively relegating the existence (and potential change) of gender inequalities to cultural biases in gender norms. Folbre (1994, 2001) has convincingly argued that the maintenance of a healthy pool of labour and the generational reproduction of the labour force raises the issue of the state's responsibility in its own right. From this angle, even if the principle of "women are carers by nature" holds steadfast, reduction in inequalities of overhead time are warranted.

In concluding this section a few words on empirical tools are in order. Greater availability of time-use data in recent years has facilitated construction of satellite accounts capturing production outside of the SNA boundaries. Still, there is great need to operationalize these ideas and to integrate them in modelling tools that can be used for macroeconomic analysis and impact-assessment exercises. Social accounting matrix (SAM) analysis<sup>15</sup> is an effective way of examining the interconnection between unpaid work and the market economy.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Harvey and Mukhopadhyay (2007), estimating time-adjusted poverty thresholds taking into account the amount of time spent on unpaid housework in Canada, find high incidences of time deficit among employed single parents with children.

<sup>14</sup> For documentation, see various reports at <http://www.levy.org/undp-levy-conference>

<sup>15</sup> A SAM is a square matrix that represents transactions among various sectors and actors in an economy and usually consists of six accounts: activities (the productive sectors of the economy), commodities (intermediate, domestic, and imported goods used in production), factors of production (such as capital and labour, usually disaggregated by skill or other characteristics), institutions (such as households, firms, and government), capital account (which incorporates the financial side of the macroeconomy), and rest of the world.

<sup>16</sup> SAMs are of value in and of themselves and allow for short-term evaluations, but they also provide the informational basis for constructing Computable General Equilibrium (CGI) models, the most promising of which, in the view of this author, are the structural variety.

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A gender-aware SAM is capable of containing information on institutional production sectors that rely on paid formal, paid informal, and household unpaid work, allowing for male-female intensity of labour factors to be identified and also to be broken down by skill level and occupation, where value-added can be split by gender for both paid and unpaid work contributions made to the economy in all sectors.<sup>17</sup> Once a SAM is constructed, it can be also used as the informational basis of Computable General Equilibrium models (CGE). Recent efforts in constructing gender-aware SAMs and CGEs include models for Bangladesh (Fontana and Wood, 2000), Zambia (Fontana, 2002), Nepal (Fofana, Cockburn, and Decaluwé, 2005), Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2005), and Spain (Uriel et al., 2005).

To give some insight into the type of explorations such exercises allow, we present brief summaries of two papers. The paper on Bangladesh (Fontana and Wood 2000) concentrates on the impact of foreign trade on women's wages, employment, and household work. In addition to the traditional market sector, the authors include and assign market values to two more sectors – the unpaid work (social reproduction) and a leisure sector. They proceed to model female and male labour separately as imperfect substitutes assuming higher female labour intensity in some production market activities and less male labour intensity in household reproduction work. Once the model is set up, they simulate several scenarios and record the effects of: (a) changes in trade policies and (b) foreign capital flows on the employment, wages, leisure, and social reproduction activities of women and men. Their findings suggest that a rise in world food prices would increase women's wages vis-à-vis that of men, but their available cash income would decline and so would their leisure time. On the other hand, an increase in inward foreign direct investment gives women higher relative wages, more cash income, and more leisure with clear implications for policy.

The study on Nepal by Fofana, Cockburn, and Decaluwé (2005) analyses the effects of trade liberalization on male and female work. The structure of their model is similar to the one mentioned above and its contribution is principally based upon the investigation of male participation in domestic work. The experiment conducted in this paper shows that the complete elimination of tariffs on imported goods in Nepal benefits women more than men in terms of earnings and that female market-work hours expand in rural households, but contract in urban households. It also shows that women end up with a “double day,” i.e. no reduction in the time they spend in domestic unpaid work. As a result, their leisure time declines as they enter the labour market. Furthermore, the study indicates that leisure time consumed by men, which is already greater than that consumed by women, increases with trade reform. Among other findings, the authors conclude that women are more responsive to the market when there is greatest opportunity to substitute between domestic household work and market work, i.e. when men are more involved in domestic work.

These represent encouraging first steps toward building appropriate modelling tools for simulation and impact analysis. Data gaps and oversimplifying assumptions are often mentioned as caveats in this work and it is often the case that underlying assumptions and decisions about model closures make the findings somewhat difficult to accept without reservations. Yet, they do point us to analytical thinking and empirical research that makes the invisible parts of the economy transparent, thus allowing us to trace the implications of trade, fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies on *all* segments of the economy.

<sup>17</sup> What has not been done as of yet is to identify activities and commodities by contributions of unpaid labour inputs.

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### 3. The intersection of paid and unpaid (care) work

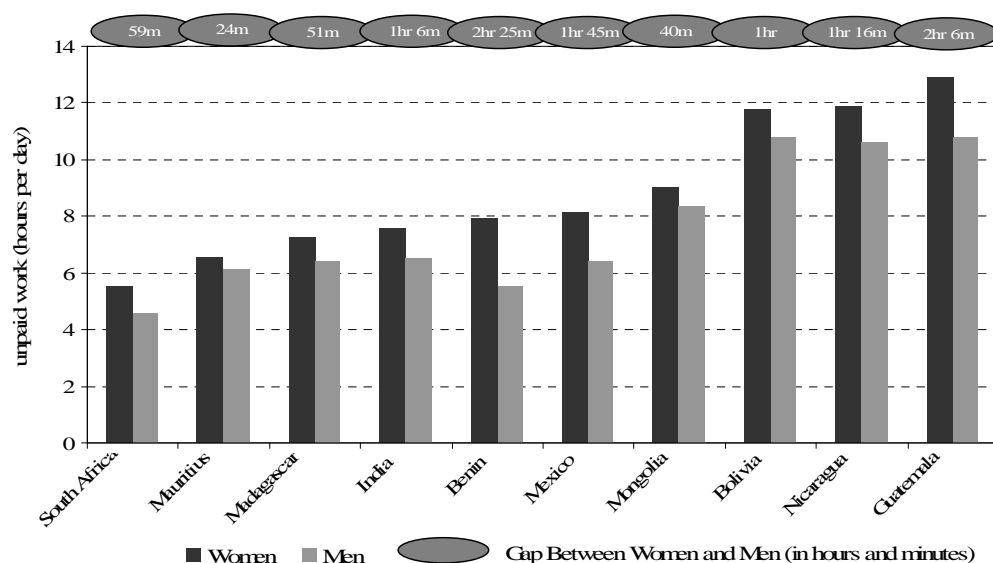
In the world of paid work there is a continuum that runs from employed to underemployed to unemployed to discouraged workers. On another axis, we can distinguish workers by status of employment such as employer, employee (salaried and waged worker), own account, casual/temporary/informal, and unpaid family worker; there is yet another distinction in terms of the place of work between street, home-based, or formal place of work. In the world of unpaid work, there exist differences between the type of activity (subsistence production, direct care, indirect care, procurement of intermediate inputs) and location (home, private or common lands, public buildings) where the activity is performed, as well as who the direct individual beneficiaries are (household members, communities, institutions).<sup>18</sup>

Existing patterns in the division of labour between men and women manifest inherited differences and deeply rooted inequalities. These are not immutable though. Sometimes economic development and social policy interventions can result in positive changes. Textile factory production and the multi-fibre agreements in the South resulted in gains in employment for women and comparable-worth policies in the North are highly correlated with the lowest gender wage differentials. Redressing inequalities though, requires documenting current trends and monitoring changes. This is a lot more difficult in the area of unpaid work, as there is a dearth of time-use information for many countries.

As we have seen in Section 1, women do most of the provisioning of unpaid (care) work, while men tend to devote most of their time to paid work. While these general patterns have been changing slowly, they are still the prevalent patterns in much of the world. Although female labour force participation (FLFP) is higher today than twenty years ago, FLFP has increased only slightly in the last decade, standing at 40 per cent in 2006 as compared to 39.7 per cent ten years ago (ILO, 2007). It is interesting to note at this juncture (as the figure below illustrates) that when combined with unpaid work, women work longer hours than men in general.

<sup>18</sup> To give an example, unpaid care work subsidizes wages that benefit some employers, but also limits demand for goods and services produced by other employers; unpaid home-based care reduces the public budgetary allocations to health care provisioning.

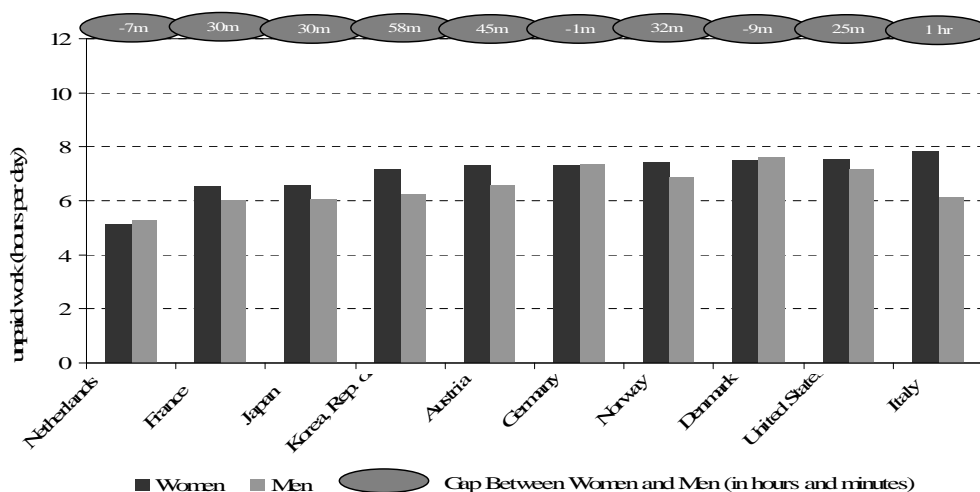
**Figure 3-1. Time spent on unpaid work – selected developing countries**



Source: Author's tabulations; data from UNDP (2006) for OECD countries and ECLAC (2007)

Burda, Hamermesh, and Weil (2007) argue that this is not the case for many European countries, the exceptions being Italy, France, and Spain. This is an interesting question of research and more work is warranted in this area. Be that as it may, a simple tabulation below shows considerable differences among advanced countries, with Austria, for example, witnessing women working an average 22.5 extra days per year and 30 extra days in Korea, while in Denmark, where men work an extra nine minutes per day, males work longer, by an average of 4.5 days per year.

**Figure 3-2. Time spent on unpaid work – selected OECD countries**



Source: Author's tabulations; data from UNDP (2006) for OECD countries and ECLAC (2007)

Another emerging finding from simple tabulations is that the difference in total work time between men and women is smaller in urban centres than in rural areas and declines overall with level of development of the area/country of residence (see figure A-1 in the appendix).

As we proceed to provide a snapshot of differences between men and women below, we do so in the belief that “the step from unpaid contributing family worker or low-paid, own-account worker to wage and salaried employment is a major step toward freedom and self-determination for many women” (ILO, 2007). It has been correctly argued that decent

conditions of employment and living wages are very important for women's emancipation and that simply expanding employment opportunities is not necessarily beneficial. We are in complete agreement, but we take exception with those who suggest that staying outside the market may be a preferable option for women. We side rather with those in favour of collective action and pressuring companies and governments to adhere and enforce international standards, even when the obstacles are many.<sup>19</sup>

The fundamental gender-based division of labour between production of commodities and unpaid work devoted to the reproduction of human beings has resulted in women being concentrated in economic activities with low earnings, insecure and irregular jobs, and where there is little protection through labour laws. Data on employment patterns broken by sex confirms that women are less likely to be employers and, in developing countries (with the exception of Latin America and the Caribbean and few countries in North Africa), they are less likely than men to be waged or salaried workers (see table A-1 in the appendix). In the short space provided in this paper we cannot do justice to the many differences between men and women in paid employment, instead we restrict our discussion to presenting some stylized facts.

### 3.1 Women as contributing family workers

Worldwide, there is a downward trend in people working as contributing family workers and overall an inverse relationship to level of economic development is evident. The other pronounced characteristic of this type of work is that many more women are found to be unpaid contributing family workers: while 11.6 per cent of men are contributing unpaid family workers, over 25 per cent of the world's women were found in this sector in 2006. Regional breakdowns show wide variation. In South Asia the ratio for women to men is 62.6 per cent versus 16.2 per cent, as table 3-1 shows below. In Latin America the rates are 5.1 to 3.7, correspondingly. Women are consistently found to be in this line of work anywhere between 150 to 380 per cent more than men.

**Table 3-1. Male and female status of employment, 1996 and 2006**

	Contributing Family Workers			
	1996		2006	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
World	33.2	15.8	25.1	11.6
Developed Economies and European Union	3.5	1.0	2.1	0.7
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS	10.8	5.1	7.8	3.4
East Asia	38.8	20.4	20.9	12.8
South East Asia and the Pacific	47.2	18.1	37.1	14.6
South Asia	72.8	22.4	62.6	16.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	7.2	6.2	5.1	3.7
Middle East and North Africa	33.0	14.7	28.4	11.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	36.2	27.0	39.3	23.3

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends for Women (2007), table 5.

<sup>19</sup> This is an issue that comes up often in the context of conditions of work with increasing globalization, precariousness of jobs, etc.; it also comes up in discussions regarding "cash transfers" to mothers versus "employment guarantee programs." We will return to this issue in a later section of this paper, but our view is that keeping women outside the labour market reinforces the male wage-earner ideology, which impacts on women's self determination.

## 3.2 Women in informal work

The redefinition of informal work, focused on the nature of employment (Chen et al., 2004) in terms of lack of protection and regulations, as well as lower earnings and inferior conditions of work, has pointed out that at least 60 per cent of women workers are engaged in informal employment (except for North Africa where this figure is 43 per cent) (ILO, 2002: 19). There are, however, significant regional variations. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa the share of women workers in informal employment is even as high as 84 per cent compared to 63 per cent of male workers (table 3-2); in Latin America this ratio is 58 per cent for women vis-à-vis 48 per cent for men, while in Asia the proportion of female and male non-agricultural workers in informal employment is roughly equivalent (ILO 2002; Chen et al., 2004).<sup>20</sup> Further, with globalization (Standing, 1989, 1999a, 1999b) informalization in employment has been intensified, as with the case of women as home-based workers.

**Table 3-2. Informal employment in non-agricultural employment, 1994-2000**

Region/country	Informal employment (IE) as a percentage of non-agricultural employment (NAE)	Women's IE as a percentage of women's NAE	Men's IE as a percentage of men's NAE
North Africa	48	43	49
Sub-Saharan Africa	72	84	63
Latin America	51	58	48
Asia	65	65	65

Source: J. Charmes in ILO (2002) data.

The ILO (2002) categorizes home-based work as involving various forms of work, such as: (a) routine assembly type work, like sewing and packing; (b) artisan production, such as carpet-making, among others; (c) personal services like laundry and dressmaking; (d) clerical work, like bookkeeping and telemarketing; and (e) professional work, such as computer programming, legal advising, etc. Most of the home-based work is concentrated in textile, garment, and footwear manufacturing. However, it increasingly involves more service activities, like clerical and professional work. A striking fact observed through available evidence is that the share of women's employment in these types of low-paid domestic work is as high as 80 per cent in some countries and in seven of the thirteen developing countries, the figure is higher than 70 per cent (table 3-3).

<sup>20</sup> When informal employment in agricultural employment is included, the significance of women's employment in the informal economy is overwhelming. For example, in South Africa, 70 per cent of women employed in the agricultural sector work in informal enterprises and they represent the 55 per cent of total informal employment in agriculture. In India, while agricultural informal employment corresponds to 78 per cent of women's total informal employment, the same figure is 58 per cent for men (ILO, 2002).

**Table 3-3. Home-based workers in selected developing countries**

Countries/categories of workers	Number of home-based workers	Home-based workers as a per cent of non-agricultural workforce	Women as per cent of total
Only home-workers covered			
Chile (1997)	79 740	2	82
Philippines (1993–5)	2 025 017	14	79
Thailand (1999)	311 790	2	80
Only self-employed covered			
Brazil (1995)	2 700 000	5	79
Costa Rica (1997)	48 565	5	45
Morocco (1982)	128 237	4	79
Peru (1993)	128 700	5	35
Both categories covered			
Benin (1992)	595 544	66	74
Guatemala (2000)	721 506	26	77
India (1999–2000)	23 496 800	17	44
Kenya (1999)	777 100	15	35
Mexico (1995)	5 358 331	17	43
Tunisia (1997)	211 336	11	38
Venezuela (1997)	1 385 241	18	63

Source: J. Charmes in ILO (2002) data.

### 3.3 Women in part-time and irregular jobs

A larger share of women than men are part-time<sup>21</sup> workers, which is a common pattern in almost all economies (ILO, 2003). Figure 3-3 shows the percentage of women workers who are employed in part-time jobs as a share of total women workers employed in paid work. In Australia, Japan, Argentina, and Switzerland, more than 40 per cent of female workers are engaged in part-time employment and this figure is as high as 60 per cent in Netherlands. On the other hand, less than 20 per cent of male workers are engaged in part-time employment; the figure is less 10 per cent in the case Switzerland.

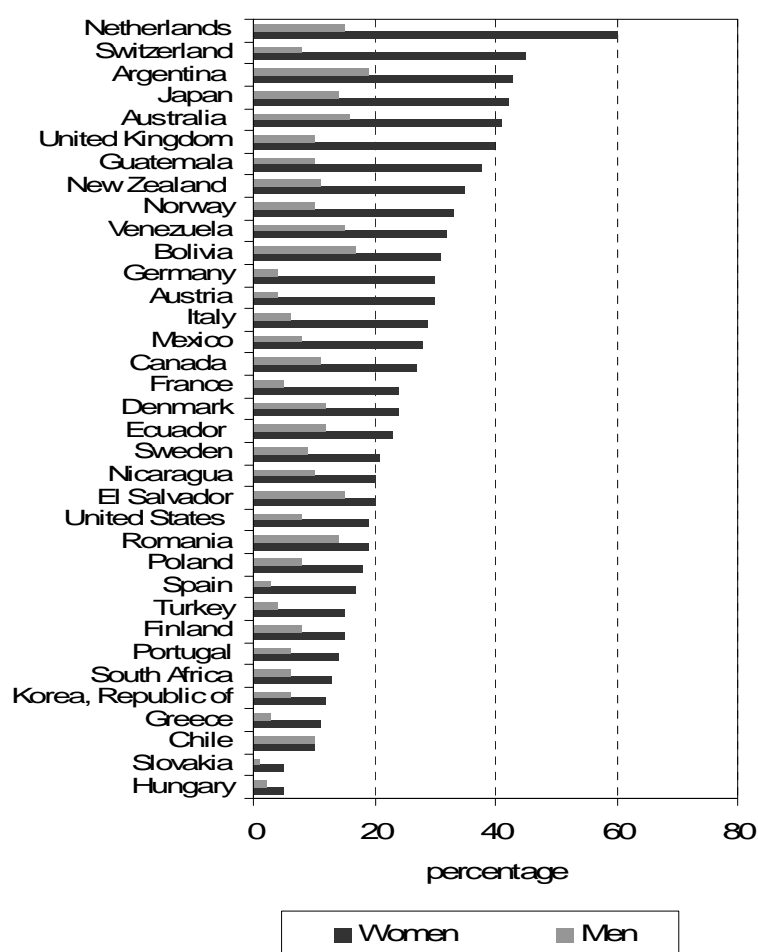
In terms of regional variation, women make up a larger proportion in developed countries (as high as 98 per cent in Sweden, 80 per cent in the United Kingdom, and 68 per cent in both Japan and the United States in 1998), while in developing ones, particularly in the Caribbean and Central American region, the female share of part-time employment is around 50 per cent (see figure A-2 in the appendix). Coupled with rising female participation, it is a point for further research to examine the extent to which people undertake part-time work out of choice or because, as it has been suggested elsewhere, there are no alternative options (ILO, 2003).

Evidence shows that working part-time is associated with high pay penalties, even in the developed-country cases. For instance, one recent study on women's wages in Britain finds that women who work part-time earn about 25 per cent less than women working full-time (Manning and Petrangolo, 2007). The extent of the pay penalty for working part-time was found to be much greater for women than for men (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2007). Estimates show that women who move back to full-time work after only one year of part-

<sup>21</sup> Part-time work is defined as less than thirty hours of work per week in a main job.

time work earn up to 10 per cent less per hour, even 15 years later. Manning and Petrangolo (2007) try to explain the underlying reasons behind this gap and find that the part-time pay penalty is partly explained by rising occupational segregation (which will be discussed next) and partly by rising wage inequality *per se*.

**Figure 3-3. Percentage of employment that is part-time**



Source: UN Statistics and Indicators on women and men, table 5b. Data presented here corresponds to the latest figures available. Cross-country comparison requires great caution due to differences in national surveys; see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/tab5b.htm> for detailed technical information on the national surveys.

### 3.4 Industry and occupational sex segregation

Women who have regular paid jobs face job segregation in the form of occupational sex segregation and/or industry sex segregation all over the world. Distribution of employment by sector broken down by sex shows that the share of male workers in industry is higher in comparison to females in all countries where data is available except for a few countries (Honduras, Macau, China, Maldives, and Morocco [ILO 2003]). Employment in agriculture depicts a higher share of male workers, but the differences between the shares by sex are not as high as in the industry sector. The indicators also show regional variations. In Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, North Africa, and some economies in Latin America and the Caribbean, women have a higher share in agricultural employment, especially in economies with low per capita income (table 3-4). As can be observed across the globe, women’s share in industry is lower than men’s. Looking at the service sector we observe that the share of women workers in the service sector is higher vis-à-vis men almost in all countries. As pointed out by the ILO (2004), “within the service sector, women are still concentrated in sectors that are traditionally associated with their gender roles, particularly in community, social and personal services, whereas men dominate the better-paid sector jobs in financial and business services and real estate” (ILO



2004a). Furthermore, as depicted in figure A-3 in the appendix, female and male shares of employment by sectors show persistent structure of these patterns over time.

**Table 3-4. Male and female share in total employment by sector, 1996 and 2006**

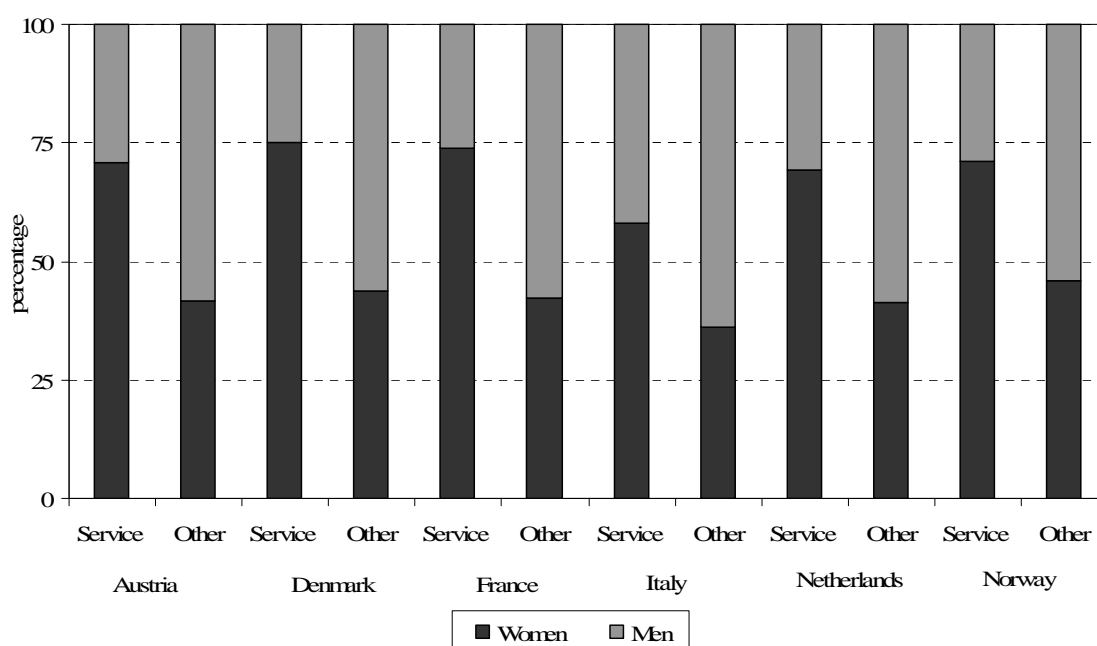
	Employment in agriculture (%)				Employment in industry (%)			
	1996		2006		1996		2006	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
World	45.4	41.6	40.4	37.5	17.4	23.9	17.2	24
Developed economies and European Union	4.3	5.8	2.5	3.7	16.8	37.3	12.4	33.6
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) and CIS	25.5	26.8	21.6	22.4	22.1	32.7	19.7	34.3
East Asia	58.4	50.4	52.1	45.3	24	26.2	24.7	26.8
South East Asia and the Pacific	52.5	49.9	47.2	46.8	13.7	18.3	15.4	19.5
South Asia	72.6	53.9	64.5	46.4	12	16.8	17.7	19.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	14	28.5	9.9	24.7	14.5	23.7	14.3	23.4
Middle East and North Africa	33	28.8	39.1	26.7	17.7	22.8	11.7	26.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	69.4	67	64.2	62.1	5.8	11.4	5.5	11.3

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends for Women (2007), table 4.

**As we have seen, women tend to be in sectors that provide more temporary, lower-paying jobs than men.** Sex segregation can be observed more clearly in terms of occupations. Occupational segregation has been one common pattern observed both in developing, as well as developed, regions of the world. In comparison to the 1970s and 1980s, even though recent figures on occupational segregation depict a reduction in developed countries as well as Latin American and Middle Eastern countries, there is no change observed in transition economies and economies in the Far East. In addition, despite the decreasing trend in some regions, segregation levels still show high figures all around the world (Anker et al., 2003), including European Union countries. Estimates using the latest available data by UNECE show the high degree of occupational segregation in 2005 (figure 3-4). For instance, in Austria and Italy, almost three-quarters of service and sales workers – which includes housekeepers and personal-care workers – are women, whereas men fill up other occupations.

Thus, gendered patterns of occupational and industrial segregation summarized above are associated with women undertaking occupations that resemble the characteristics of unpaid care work. As a result, **women's work is often undervalued.** The occupations and sectors that are dominated by women are generally seen as being less important, requiring lower skills, and, thus, deserving of lower earnings than the occupations and sectors dominated by men. Men working in such occupations and sectors are also penalized in terms of pay.

**Figure 3-4. Occupational segregation: share of women and men in service and sales workers; share of women and men in other occupations, 2005**



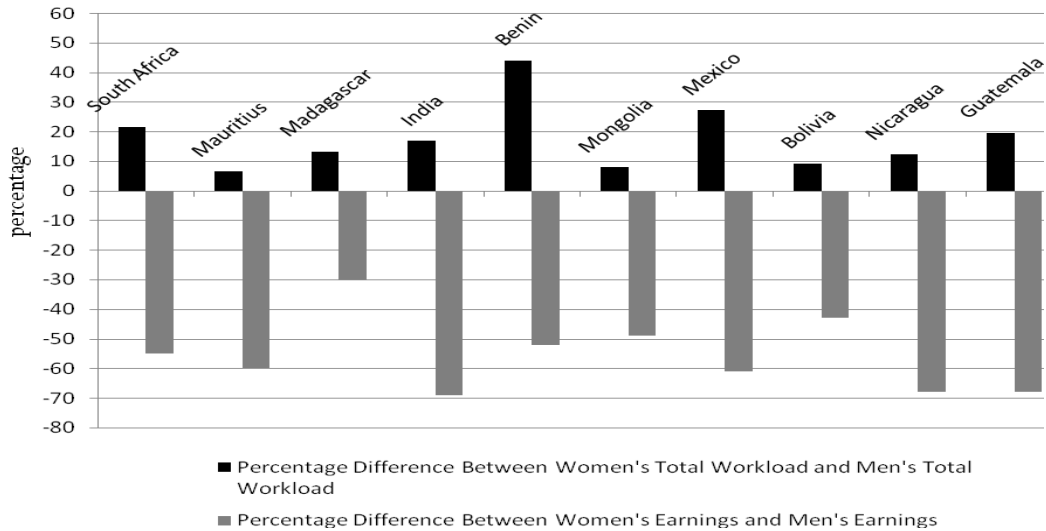
Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (EUROSTAT and ILO) official sources.

### 3.5 Total workload (unpaid and paid work) and earnings gap: Women and men

To this point, we tried to present briefly the patterns of employment of women and men in paid work. However, from the beginning, we have been trying to call attention to the urgent need to bring unpaid work together with paid work in order to make visible the full extent of work inequality women are subjected to. As we have seen, whether women are engaged in paid work or not, they spend: (a) more time in unpaid care work than men and (b) more total time in paid and unpaid work combined. In other words, their lower time allocation in paid work is more than compensated in unpaid work contributions.

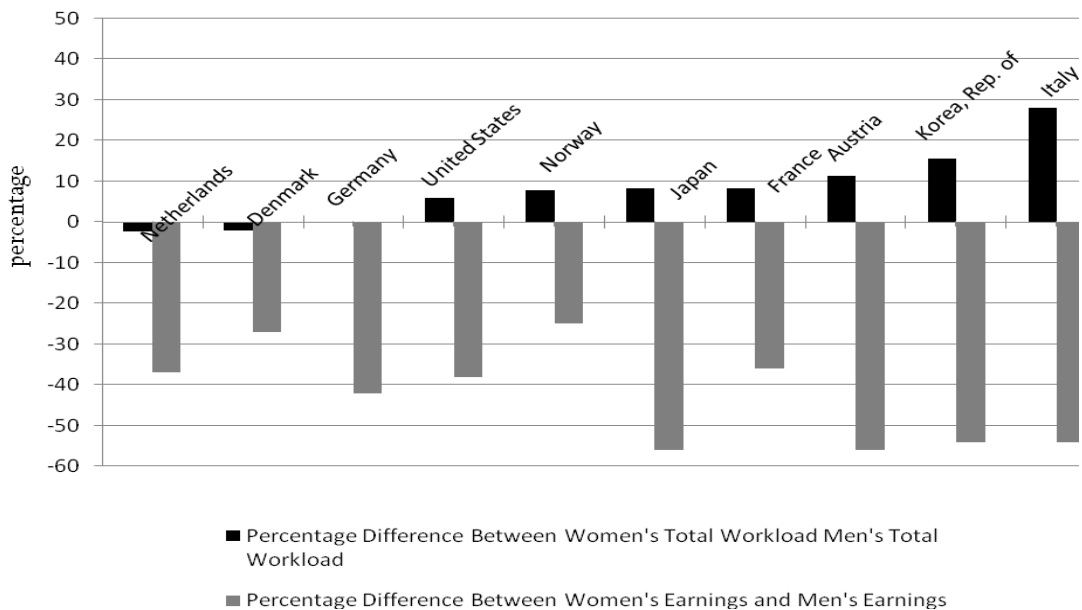
As we have seen, the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men is accompanied by a different inequality – that of persistent wage differentials. Figures 3-5 and 3-6 paint a grim picture, not only for developing countries, but also in OECD countries: while women’s total workload is higher than men’s, their earnings are lower than that of men. These figures indicate the extent of undervaluation and invisibility of unpaid workload and the undervaluation of women’s work in the labour market.

**Figure 3-5. Total workload and earnings gap: selected developing countries**



Source: Authors' calculations. For the total workload series, see the source of figure I-1. For the earnings gap, the ratio of estimated female to male earnings is used, which is provided by UNDP-Human Development Report (HDR) (2006).

**Figure 3-6. Total workload – earnings gap: Selected OECD countries**



Source: Authors' calculations. For the total workload series, see the source of figure I-1. For the earnings gap, the ratio of estimated female to male earnings is used, which is provided by UNDP-Human Development Report (HDR) (2006).

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## 4. Paid and unpaid work: globalization, domestic work, and global care chains

The free and borderless movement of goods, foreign direct investment, and speculative financial capital has brought mixed and uneven socio-economic outcomes, with some groups benefiting while others are left behind. As a consequence, their positive or deleterious effects have been hotly debated for some time now.<sup>22</sup> Gender outcomes of globalization processes have also been mixed, leading to much research and extensive debates.

### 4.1 Globalization and gender issues

There has been general agreement that liberalization of trade and foreign direct investment has been accompanied by expanded employment creation for women. In the North, a notable change occurred in the late 1980s and during the 1990s in that new female entrants in the service sectors of the economy included mothers with young children. In the South, many women – in addition to being employed in agriculture – sought and found jobs in textiles and clothing, undertaking factory jobs much like women did during early industrialization in the North (Beneria, 2003).<sup>23</sup> According to Memis (2007), a variety of explanations underlie these trends, ranging from a gender-favouring comparative advantage of trade sectors between the North and the South (Wood, 1994)<sup>24</sup> to sectoral expansion of female-intensive sectors (Elson, 1996). In addition, it has been argued that feminization of labour has taken a stronghold (Standing, 1989,1999a,1999b), a process adopted by employers as a reaction to intensified global competition, according to which substitution of women workers (lower paid) for men ensures a more “flexible” and cheaper labour force.

An equally important issue in the literature regards the degree to which increased female labour force participation has been transformative in reducing gender wage differentials and wage discrimination. The evidence is mixed. Using comprehensive ILO occupational wage data for over 80 countries, Oostendorp (2004) finds that in some cases wage gaps decrease with the level of development, trade, and foreign investment. In other instances, the key determinant turns out to be the skill category of workers, as the overarching trend has been for wage gaps to widen between unskilled and skilled labour over time. Berik et al. (2004) also finds that competition from international trade does not reduce gender-based wage discrimination in Taiwan and Korea.

Related to the above issues, there has been considerable debate on whether women employed in export-oriented industries and in export-processing zones became *victims* of globalization or *beneficiaries* of increased autonomy and bargaining power. On the one hand, it has been argued that increased female labour-market participation was based on exploiting women’s “nimble fingers,” characterized by proliferation of subcontracting, spreading of informalization of work, and the erosion of labour standards (Elson and Pearson, 1989; Sayeed and Balakrishnan, 2004; Unni and Bali, 2002). Kabeer (2004) has challenged this view. Based on fieldwork in Bangladesh, she has argued that the process is

<sup>22</sup> For example, see Bhagwati (2004) for views on one end of the spectrum and Stiglitz (2002) and Rodrik (1997) on the other.

<sup>23</sup> See also Arriagada (1998) and Thorin (2001) for a review on Latin America; Benería and Lind (1995) discuss trade liberalization and gender issues in the context of NAFTA and the European Community.

<sup>24</sup> For a refutation of the Wood argument, see Kucera and Milberg (2000).

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much more complex, if contradictory, and that enforcing global labour standards through international trade agreements would not serve the interests of women.<sup>25</sup>

Sorting out the interaction of globalization with unpaid work has been pursued in two distinct areas. The first area concerns the implications of increased levels of international trade and foreign direct investment on women's time allocation between paid work, unpaid work, and leisure in developing countries. As discussed earlier in the paper, there have been several studies in recent years. To provide another example along these lines, Siddiqui (2005) develops a gender-informed model for Pakistan, based on social account matrix and computable general equilibrium analysis. The study explores the impact of two types of shocks: trade liberalization and fiscal adjustment. Her results show that trade liberalization over-burdens women but reduces income-based poverty and affirms the hypothesis that despite changes in the gender structure of market employment, an entrenched gender division of labour remains unequal within the household economy.

Second, a different set of issues emerged in testing the "convergence" hypothesis, which examines patterns in allocation of time to unpaid and paid work between men and women across time and countries. Burda, Hamermesh, and Weil (2007), using time-diary data from 25 countries, have recently demonstrated that there is a negative relationship between real GDP per capita and the female-male difference in the sum of work for pay and work at home, while estimates in some countries in the North show that there has been a *convergence* between the time allocated to unpaid work by women and men. European and North American men have increased the time allocated to unpaid domestic labour (Gershuny and Robinson 1988; Sullivan and Gershuny 2001; Beaujot and Liu 2005).

Despite the increase in men's participation in unpaid household production work, it is hard to dispute that women are the ones who overwhelmingly assume the responsibility of domestic work (Sullivan, 2000). Recognizing the prevalence of changing work arrangements and allowing for the existence of simultaneous and overlapping activities (Floro, 2003), the picture changes dramatically. Craig (2006), based on the 1997 Australian time-use survey data, finds that mothering in comparison to its fathering counterpart involves more multitasking, as well as more physical labour and a more rigid time table, thus time women spend in care work is more demanding – a finding that applies to part-time and full-time working women alike. Some findings have even suggested a reversal in the trend of men's allocated time to domestic work. Crompton, Brockmann, and Lyonette (2005), based on 2002 survey data from Britain, Norway, and the Czech Republic, find a declining trend in men's involvement in domestic work due to rising work pressures and rising needs for career development.

Trends summarized in the previous section have shown that women's employment in services (particularly in the North, but also, as Beneria [2003] has argued, in India, the Caribbean, and Asia) has expanded substantially. The majority of these jobs correspond to clerical, sales work, and data processing for financial services in the banking, insurance, and airline industries. As women have entered paid work, in many countries, a care deficit has appeared. And where state and corporate responsibility have not stepped up to the plate to provide child care, eldercare, and care for the permanently ill, feminization of international migration has provided a means for alleviating the global crisis of care, especially in the North. This is the topic we turn to next.

## 4.2 Domestic work and global care chains

The paid care sector tends to evolve alongside the unpaid care sector. In many countries, paid care work is highly female-dominated, as well as being low-status and low-paid

<sup>25</sup> David Kucera (2002) has challenged the view that foreign direct investment "prefers" countries with lower labour standards.

compared to other forms of paid work involving similar levels of skill and training. Race and ethnicity are also important markers in occupational hierarchies, with disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups often over-represented as frontline carers.

One common pattern observed across the globe is the fact that domestic work is one of the major sources of employment for women. In 2004, only in the Latin America region, 10 per cent of all new jobs created were in domestic service and, not surprisingly, the domestic sector service became a highly growing one – by almost 5 per cent a year (ECLAC, 2007). Possible explanations behind this high growth are stated as the recovery in the earnings of middle-income groups, as well as lack of job opportunities for women. The intersection of unpaid and paid work becomes more evident when one recognizes the particularities of paid domestic work, which tend to be not only undervalued and unregulated jobs with the lowest pay and low status, but also embedded in expectations of being on call twenty-four hours a day. An indication of this is the discrimination against domestic workers in national labour legislations and regulations (Box A).

#### Box A

##### Regulation of Employment – Discrimination Against Domestic Workers – Some Examples

**Costa Rica:** Costa Rica has a labour code that entitles employers to engage children from the age of 12 as domestic servants. Domestic workers are allowed to require a 12-hour working day of a domestic helper and 4 additional daily working hours if considered necessary. Chile: Chilean Labour Code states that monetary remuneration of workers in private households can be set at 75 percent of the monthly minimum wage since the worker's food and lodging is counted as part of the remuneration.

**Croatia:** Safety and Health Protection at the Workplace Act (1996) states: "the provisions of this Act do not apply to domestic servants."

**El Salvador:** The Labour Code currently in use states that: a) employment contract for domestic service workers may be entered verbally; b) domestic service workers are entitled to at least 12 hours a day for rest, but a working hours schedule need not be set; and c) domestic service workers must provide services on their day offs on employers' requests.

**Jordan:** The Labour Code (1996) states "the provisions of this Code shall apply to all workers and employers, except domestic servants, gardeners, cooks, and the like.

**Korea:** The Labour Standards Act (1997) states: "This Act shall not apply to any business or workplace which employs only relatives living together and to a worker who is hired for domestic work."

**Norway:** Working Environment Act (1977) specifies: "The Crown shall decide whether and to what extent this Act shall be applicable to work performed in the employee's home. The Crown may further decide that the rules of this Act shall apply, wholly or in part, to workers who carry out domestic work, care, or nursing in the home or household of private employers, and may in this connection stipulate particular regulations for such employees."

**United States of America:** The National Labour Relations Act cites that "the term 'employee' shall not include any individual employed as an agricultural worker or in the domestic service of any family or person at his home."

Source: J.M. Ramirez-Machado (2000) and ECLAC (2007).

Trying to keep up with the responsibilities of care work and the paid domestic work adds to the hardship of the conditions of domestic work. Women who cannot delegate domestic work burdens at their own places frequently devote themselves to household work and stay at home without earnings if they can afford staying home. This stands as the underlying reason behind low activity rates of women (lower than 50 per cent in 94 countries among 188 countries where data is available according to the latest figures<sup>26</sup> provided by UN).

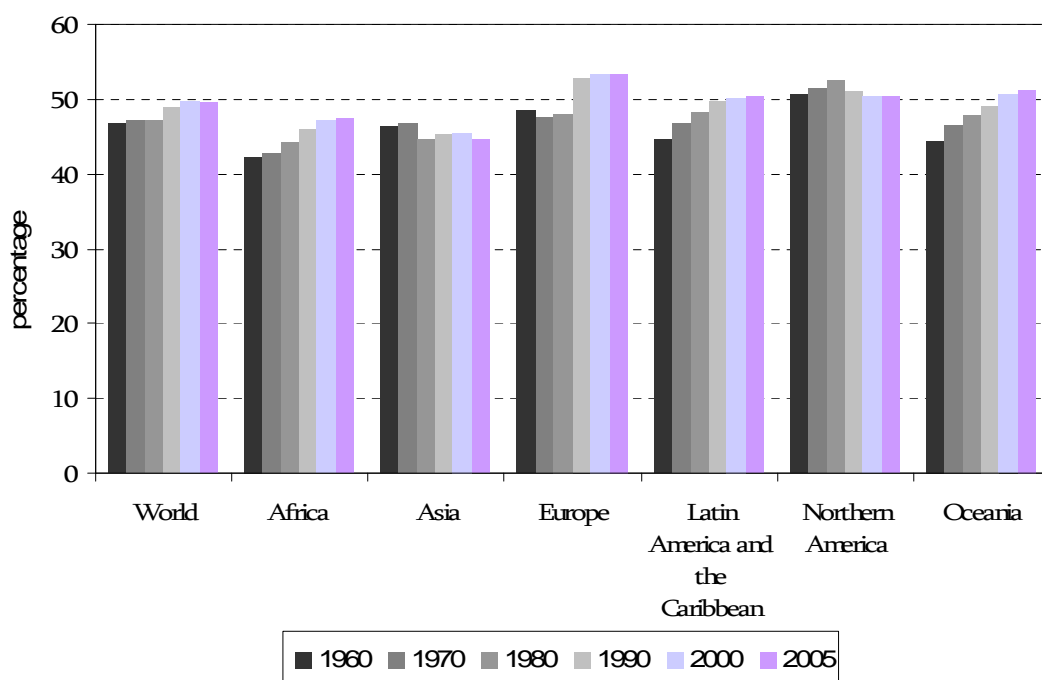
When the responsibility is delegated, unless there is an active state involvement in some sort of public policy to support families, it is passed off to relatives and other family members – either to grandmothers or to the daughters. ECLAC (2007) presents evidence for the fact that over half of the women aged 20 to 24 do not seek outside employment because they are performing unpaid work. The number of women who are in this group is

<sup>26</sup> Data updated in June 2007 is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwfm/tab5a.htm>.

higher than the number in the education system (30.1 per cent as against 15.9 per cent), whereas when men are economically inactive it is because they are studying or for some other reason. Similarly, 85 per cent of children spending over 20 hours a week on housework in Chile in 2003 were girls; in Bolivia, in the data for 2001, girls under 14 spent over 20 hours a week carrying wood or fetching water and 20 hours a week washing and ironing clothes, which are actually the activities that are likely to impact their health adversely (ECLAC, 2007). On quantifying the scale of child labour, the ILO defined concepts such as light work (work that does not affect children’s health or personal development), child labour, and worst forms of child labour, each classified according to the number of hours spent on these activities and the extent to which children’s health or physical safety is imperilled. However, all these definitions consider only “economic” (paid or unpaid) activities as work, which is carried out for the market or for private consumption. Thus, these concepts do not pay much attention to the possible harmful implications of unpaid domestic service on these children’s health and development. When housework is considered, there is evidence now showing that such types of activities are mostly pursued by girls (ECLAC, 2007).

Societies need for managing to maintain both paid care work and unpaid care work requires further support and consideration as the situation becomes so brutal for domestic workers who cross borders for some reasons. As of 2005, there were about 200 million migrants across the globe, supporting a population in their respective countries that is as big if not bigger. Of these, 200 million (a number that corresponds to 3 per cent of the world population) are women (figure IV-1).

**Figure 4-1. Female migrants as percentage of all international migrants**



Source: United Nations Population Division, World Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision Population Database: <http://esa.un.org/migration/>. Note that as a result of the disintegration of the former USSR, the former Czechoslovakia, and the former Yugoslavia, as well as the reunification of Germany, the composition of several regions and major areas changed shortly after 1990. Information on these changes and the regional classification of countries is available at: <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=3>

Either because of the demand for cheap labour in destination countries (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002; Sassen, 2003) or due to lack of available job opportunities in the country of birth (with expectations of finding better-paying jobs) or for both reasons, millions of women move across borders (UNDP, 2005; ILO, 2004b). However, given the basic gender division of labour in destination countries, women migrants are often restricted to traditionally “female” occupations – such as domestic work, care work, nursing, work in the domestic services, and sex work – that are frequently unstable jobs

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marked by low wages, the absence of social services, and poor working conditions (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Discrimination in labour legislations and laws against domestic workers, a majority of which are women, adds to their vulnerability. On top of the fact that they are isolated from their own families and communities, women are more subject to deprivation, hardship, violence, theft, fraud, or abuse. More significantly, young women are at greatest risk for unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. In situations where women know little of the language of the country of destination or where their qualifications are not recognized in their new places, they find themselves in extremely dreadful situations. Thus, discrimination of “otherness” is added to gender discrimination.

This said, it has been argued that migration can offer economic opportunities, financial independence, and decision-making power for women to escape restrictions. In addition, it is also argued that migration through remittances can play a significant role in poverty reduction and growth in developing countries, benefiting the countries of origin (Lucas, 2004; Adams, 2005; World Bank, 2006). Estimations show that in 2005 remittances were as high as \$300 billion, which corresponds to almost three times the \$104 billion from the world’s combined foreign-aid budgets. For example, remittances bring Morocco more foreign exchange than tourism does, and bring Sri Lanka more than tea does (DeParle, 2007); for Latin America and the Caribbean region they bring 2.67 per cent of the region’s GDP (ECLAC, 2007). By increasing reserves of foreign exchange, remittances reduce government borrowing costs, saving the Philippines about half a billion dollars in interest each year. While 80 per cent of the money sent to Latin America is spent on consumption, nearly \$12 billion is left for investment (DeParle, 2007). Evidence also points out that households receiving remittance income account for a large percentage of incomes, such as in Uruguay (45 per cent), in Paraguay (41.9 per cent), and in Mexico (35.6 per cent) (ECLAC, 2007). However, with respect to recipients, there is still significant variation among regions as the largest recipients are middle-income countries, whereas sub-Saharan Africa received only 1.5 per cent of all remittance flows in 2002. Given also the fact that members of the very poor households are less able to migrate, the outreach of these remittances to the poor families and poor regions is less likely.

Since care work is traditionally a woman’s responsibility back in their countries of birth and/or in country of destination, when one considers the intersection of unpaid care work and paid care work, one should recognize that without any support to the migrant families, remittances alone are not sufficient to redistribute the burden of their workload. Supporting families with social provisioning for their children becomes extremely vital. Sometimes the children are left behind because the working conditions for the women do not permit them to have accompanying family members, so more frequently they are left with grandparents or other relatives, subsidizing the system of global care chain (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2002).

As a result of all these patterns, women tend to be in sectors/industries and occupations that remain unprotected. In the context of globalization, it makes it harder for them to realize their fundamental rights as workers, even in countries where such rights exist in law and are enforced. The problem is not only the existence of the laws and their enforcement, but also the differential ability of men and women to realize these fundamental rights (such as freedom of association, the right to bargain over conditions of work, etc., as well as the absence of forced labour).



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## 5. Unpaid work and poverty

In securing basic needs, the provisioning of necessities and conveniences of life occur through a combination of paid and unpaid work in four key institutions: market, state, households, and nongovernment (non-profit) institutions. In general, the contribution of each of these institutions in securing material needs varies by the level of economic development of the country people live in and in accordance with the prevailing public provisioning policy regime.

In turn, the degree to which a person is able to procure “goods” and “services” from the market depends on whether markets are relatively well developed, as well as the ability of household members to participate in paid work and earn sufficient income to make the necessary purchases. Income poverty due to joblessness or substandard living wages limits access to marketized inputs. On the other hand, independent of how poor or wealthy a household is, some time must be devoted to “overhead household production,” i.e., time needed to transform purchases into consumable final goods. Wealthy households are in a position to often substitute hired services for their own unpaid overhead household production contributions. A cook, gardener, or laundry services do just that.

Finally, households that are income poor and are not able to buy such services may also face difficulties in paying the customary user fees to have running water or electricity in their home, make use of public or private transportation, or to avail themselves to durable household assets that reduce household production time, such as an electric stove, refrigerator, or washing appliances. In yet other cases, severely poor households may live in settlements where basic services such as sanitation, electrification, and water delivery are completely missing.

Income and access to public services delivery determine *structurally* the unmet needs of families. Based on individual characteristics and other circumstances, households are called on to provide for and cope with remaining unmet needs on their own through their main available resource, that is, unpaid time contributions for direct and indirect care provisioning. It must be recognized then that the *required* contributions of unpaid work – quantitatively and qualitatively – differ between countries and among households depending on the: (a) level of economic development; (b) prevailing welfare-state policy regime; (c) availability of quality assets and time to engage in subsistence SNA production for the market and for the household; and (d) availability and quality of assets that people have access to when they engage in non-SNA/non-market, “non-economic,” unpaid household production.

The *socially necessary unpaid labour time* or “average overhead unpaid work time” will differ then according to socio-economic and individual household characteristics. These types of unpaid time contributions must be differentiated from time spent at home *voluntarily over and above what is minimally needed*. Time dedicated to preparing a gourmet meal, devoting time for the cultural enrichment of children, or constructing and maintaining an expansive flower garden are all activities that increase the well-being of household members; this time is qualitatively different from overhead unpaid time and it points to the fact that the poor and non-poor exhibit different distribution patterns of unpaid work time allocations.

This becomes evident, for example, in the case of childcare. Around the world, better-off households report longer hours supervising young children and it is speculated that this is due to their preference *and* ability to engage in “quality time” with children. On the other hand, supervising young children among the poor is left to older siblings or other relatives and is mostly considered a “secondary activity” performed simultaneously with other unpaid activities like cooking or cleaning. Time-use surveys reveal that carrying a child on one’s back while fetching water is not reported as part of “providing childcare” by most women, unless they are probed by other contextual questions such as “who was with you” or “where were the children while you performed that activity.”

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There are several important questions in this context. First, are there significant differences in the time-use patterns of the poor versus non-poor? Second, how does income poverty affect time allocated to unpaid (care) work? Third, is there a time-poverty concept that can be constructed in parallel to income poverty? Fourth, should income poverty be expanded to include time burdens of poor people and women in particular? And finally, what is a meaningful way of conceptualizing time poverty and who are the time poor? Answers to these questions are of value in and of themselves, but from our perspective, insights are important in that they carry implications for poverty reduction policies.<sup>27</sup>

In spite of the voluminous literature on poverty and the debates on measurement, not much is known about how the poor spend their time. As they are often employed in “difficult to measure sectors” like subsistence work, home-work, and street vending, the economic paid work done by the poor is not usually captured adequately through conventional labour force surveys (Charmes and Hirway, 2006); time-use surveys are better suited for that purpose. They are also better suited in making visible their engagement in subsistence work for own consumption and on “non-economic” domestic unpaid work. The cash poor may need to work longer hours, but when jobs are not available they may have to migrate in search of work or devote longer hours in unpaid work as a coping strategy to make ends meet. Information on these unpaid activities of the poor is likely to throw additional light on their constraints and problems.

In making use of the concept “time poverty,” a caveat must be identified. It is quite intuitive to argue that a female senior business executive, junior lawyer, and domestic worker who devote twelve hours a day in paid work for extended periods of time may turn out to be sleep deprived, socially reclusive, or unable to adequately attend to personal care and needs of others. Among many other differences these women may share, for our purposes one stands out. Their potential income would allow the first one to cross the poverty line in one hour of paid work per month, the second in three days time, while the third would need to work for an additional ten hours. This hypothetical example illustrates that although many people may experience time-stress, there is a qualitative difference that becomes apparent when time allocation to paid work is correlated to its income-generation potential.

Vickery’s (1977) seminal paper on time poverty is based on the idea that the working poor (versus the non-poor) need to spend longer hours performing paid work if they are to secure sufficient income to just reach the poverty line. It is only on the basis of these longer hours that they are able to purchase a basket of goods that allows them a minimal level of consumption. Governments calculate the minimum “economy food basket” taking for granted, she argued, that there is enough time that remains after such long paid work hours to perform the necessary household work (that transforms purchased goods into meals, for example). But more paid work means less available time for childcare, maintenance, and food preparation, leaving poor households with two options: engage in paid work even longer so as to substitute market goods for home-made ones<sup>28</sup> or face a reduction of time allocated for self-care and leisure. Using time-budget data collected on 1,400 households in the United States, she calculated that if poor household members are to reach the minimum consumption level, they must devote 26 fewer hours per week to free time (sleeping, resting, eating, personal care, and leisure) than the median-income adult in the survey. This finding points to the idea that to avoid being income poor, the working poor must endure chronic relative (at least) time poverty.

<sup>27</sup> From an analytical point of view, the first steps to addressing these questions require a framework to conceptualize *time poverty* and *poverty* in ways that take into consideration the nexus of income poverty and time poverty.

<sup>28</sup> The underlying assumption of substitutability of paid and unpaid work is questionable, but the argument can be framed without such a stringent condition (Harvey, 1996).

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Using an extension of the same analytical framework, many have investigated this issue, including a recent study on the intersection of income poverty and time poverty of working parents in Canada (Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, 2007) that illustrated the extreme situation of single, employed parents (primarily women).<sup>29</sup> Only 5.3 per cent of those in this group are subject to neither money nor time poverty, while over 54 per cent of non-employed, single parents are money poor; 58 per cent of employed single parents are time poor and money poor. In contrast, in dual parent families, over three-quarters (77.5 per cent) are neither money nor time poor.

A different study measures time poverty and analyses its determinants for the case of Guinea (Bardasi and Wodon, 2006). They use a simple calculation of a time-poverty gap represented by the mean distance separating the population from a predetermined time-poverty line, where the non-time poor are given a distance of zero.<sup>30</sup> Thresholds are established around the median of the total individual working hours distribution, against which poverty in time is evaluated. Their starting point is that time is a limited resource. They calculate the time spent working in informal or formal labour markets, plus time spent on domestic chores or collecting water and wood, and then establish a median value. Time poverty would apply to individuals because long working hours reduce time available for leisure, rest, or friends and family. In the view of the authors, this does not mean that time-poor individuals are worse off than other individuals; rather, time poverty is simply one of the many dimensions that may affect an individual's level of welfare and satisfaction with life. The concept of time poverty is therefore quite loosely used in this context.

Another issue is related to the sensitivity of the results to the cut-off poverty lines.<sup>31</sup> More significantly, analysis of the detailed types and characteristics of the activities is required in order to fully understand how they spend their time rather than just setting a poverty line adjusted with time poverty.

There exists a two-way dependence between time and poverty. Not only does time use form and structure poverty, but poverty shapes time as well.<sup>32</sup> Turner and Grieco (2000) illustrate this point clearly. Their study shows that in the UK, similar to other developed countries, women have different transport and travel patterns from men. Women are often involved in poorly resourced, highly complex, multiple-purpose trips (trip chaining), unlike men who use superior modes of transport. The underlying reason behind this, stated by the authors, is that women are time poor due to the unequal burden of household tasks. Specifically, they argue that it is poor quality public transport in low-income areas that adds to their burden. Different patterns in transport and travel come as a result of gender-based inequalities in terms of access to resources, not only economic or social, but also time resources. Thus, on one side, unequal distribution of resources and inequalities in terms of access to goods and services due to poverty shapes the experience of time across different groups in a society. On the other side, unequal access to productive resources

<sup>29</sup> Consistent with earlier findings (see Douthitt [1993] and Vickery [1977]), they find that the extent of time poverty is greatest for single mothers. Single mothers with more than two children have the highest incidence of poverty.

<sup>30</sup> They actually calculate the squared time-poverty gap; using the poverty gap they then take the square of that distance into account, which gives more weight to those who have extra-long working hours.

<sup>31</sup> The Lesotho case study reveals how sensitive the results can be depending on the decision regarding poverty threshold. In Lesotho, time-use figures for men are skewed compared to women so a higher proportion of men appear to be time poor depending on the level of the threshold; if lowered, then the difference between men and women turns out to be so marginal (Lawson, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> See Fitzpatrick (2004) for a discussion on time and poverty in the context of social policy implementation.

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(such as land ownership, access to credit, unequal opportunities in terms of access to education, unequal access to paid work, and unequal opportunities for taking part in decision-making) determine women's poverty.

There are also structural determinants of women's poverty (Valenzuela, 2003), which again lie at the heart of the unpaid/paid work nexus. As women devote more time to unpaid domestic work, they are expected to look after children and, lastly, as women's unpaid work is undervalued, income and time poverty turn out to be a vicious cycle for women. Shaping social practices, poverty as a life event has major impacts on uses of time that vary among women and men, and among different social strata.

From a policy point of view, there is a need to fully understand that poverty is not a fixed characteristic of certain disadvantaged groups, but the outcome of a diverse process. Second, any anti-poverty policy should follow an integrated approach to poverty considering the inequalities between women and men both in terms of their role in paid as well as unpaid work. Having a paying job in the labour market – or, as prescribed frequently, getting education – is not sufficient to overcome the lack of economic, social, and/or political capabilities. Anti-poverty policies, which overlook the mutually linked formation of the structural and individual factors that determine poverty, tend to perpetuate the existing gender-based inequalities.

If women's contribution to the economy was counted, it would be easy to observe also their contribution to poverty reduction. Valenzuela (2003) states that according to the estimates in Latin American urban households, if female partners in poor households who are not employed could receive work at wage levels comparable to those earned by the same income group, poverty would be lower by 8 per cent. The study also provides estimates showing how much higher poverty would be without women's contribution with figures ranging from a 100 per cent to 50 per cent rise in Argentina and Uruguay, respectively. Despite the implications of gender discrimination in the paid labour market and in the world of work, these figures indicate the significance of women's contribution in poverty reduction.

## **6. Unpaid work, unpaid care work and the role of the state**

As stated earlier, provisioning of necessities and caring occurs through a combination of paid and unpaid work that takes place through four key institutions: market, state, households, and nongovernment (non-profit) institutions. The *required* contributions of unpaid work – quantitatively and qualitatively – differ between countries and among households depending on the prevailing welfare-state policy regime and access different individuals have to the publicly provided services.

To better situate the role of the state in our discussion, we must reiterate the two basic linkages of unpaid work to the rest of the economy from a structural point of view at the macro level by asking how unpaid work contributes to the rest of the economy. We have argued that some portions of unpaid work contributions comprise overhead household time made necessary due to deficits in physical infrastructure and social-sector service delivery infrastructure. This is typically more pronounced in developing countries (Kes and Swaminathan, 2006; Charmes, 2005) where regenerating the (potential) labour force requires longer hours of unpaid work, as explained earlier.

For instance, government downsizing in the health care sector has resulted in a range of negative impacts: from reduction in the length of stay in hospitals, to reduction in hospital's custodial and nurse's aides personnel, to extreme reliance on family provisioning of home-based care as the primary means of providing care to HIV/AIDS patients. Cooking, cleaning, bathing, and feeding of ill patients is carried out primarily by women (Akintola, 2004), both at home and in hospitals. In such contexts, public policy has implicitly assumed that there is no cost to those that provide the unpaid work based on a

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notion of an infinitely elastic supply of unpaid labour. In South Africa and other African countries, the substitution effect that takes place between time devoted to health unpaid care work and unpaid family work, subsistence production, and time devoted to fetching water and fuel are invisible, but experienced by women none the less (Akintola, 2006). The same is true in developed countries whenever public goods and services are curtailed due to economic crises or to erosion of social contract entitlements, manifested in budgetary reductions of government supported services (Elson, 2000). Unpaid work in this case is performed to fill in gaps in infrastructure.

As the reasons for unpaid work inequalities are multi-layered, there need to be distinct policy interventions to effectively remedy their negative impacts for different groups of women. Work-family reconciliation policies have to be tailored accordingly. Creation of public early-childhood development centres in urban areas will be of importance to all women, but especially to those working part-time if childrearing constrains their supply of labour. Some types of assets can reduce the drudgery of work, for example, traditional irrigation systems and laying of water pipes, which would benefit poor rural women, but may also increase the productivity of rural landless households in general, as well as better-off households who have access to land; and small investments in environmental regeneration of common lands to produce fodder can also improve the productivity of unpaid work. But if the problem is due to social-sector restructuring, as is the case in many countries over the past two decades, then other types of interventions are needed.

## **6.1 The state and its contributions to social reproduction provisioning**

The role of the modern liberal state was historically circumscribed within the era immediately following the Great Depression. At that time, a welfare-promoting (activist) Keynesian state came into existence in many parts of the world, making it part and parcel of the state's responsibility to provide goods, services, and employment for those unable to do so within the market system. An equally significant development, in parallel, was the emergence of a new kind of public sphere. Since the market was understood as the institution that provides goods and services, as well as the necessary income to purchase them, the privatized economic relations of the marketplace were brought under the auspices of public authority. Securing the adequate functioning of the market amounted to establishing and safeguarding institutions and rights that allowed citizens to enter and freely negotiate contracts, own property, and, in general, participate in economic life as free agents. Conflicting (at times) interests of group claims were to be negotiated and settled according to agreed upon institutional rules. As these rules were not immutable, the state became a contested terrain; who participated in these discussions, how the agenda was formed, and the specific outcomes of such "negotiations" ultimately resulted in a social contract to be accepted and observed by all.

Coming in the aftermath of the Great Depression, this social contract implied a central role for the state, over a citizen's life cycle, that aimed to reconcile market functioning and social cohesion in three domains: (a) when the private sector did not have an incentive or the ability to provide basic goods and services in sufficient quantities and prices to satisfy basic needs, i.e. infrastructure, education, and healthcare, the state would undertake the public provisioning of such goods and services and citizens were entitled to these; (b) in view of the cyclical nature of market economies, Keynesian – state activist in nature – governance took stronghold, i.e. stepping in and implementing countercyclical and economic stabilization policies; and (c) when the market failed to provide jobs, democratic liberal states were to augment social protection programs and unemployment insurance, as well as direct job provisioning. They were, as in the New Deal program, part of the liberal democracy's charge and were envisioned as entitlements, not charitable (statist) contributions. They also provided a framework within which the state enabled individuals to pursue economic goals while providing the space for group interest protection and daily life negotiations (Antonopoulos, 2007).

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In the context of this paper, point (a) becomes important to discuss in some detail. How were basic care needs and claims to be determined? Is the state responsible for such provisioning or should other institutions participate in such provisioning, such as the market and business-supported benefits for their own workers? The 1980s and 1990s provided an answer in the form of neoliberal policies. The role of the state was to be minimized through the selling of public assets and drastic reductions in public services; expanded and highly unregulated entrepreneurial freedom was presumed to result in economic growth that would, in a more efficient manner, take care of all citizen's needs that the newly diminished role of the state would no longer provide.

This exclusive emphasis on market-driven growth and price stabilization culminated, among other things, in the polarity of “good economic outcome/bad social outcome” thinking. The first, namely economic policy, was understood as creating an economic environment conducive to investment and growth, predicated, among other things, on “smaller government.” The second, social policy, was assigned the responsibility of supporting the vulnerable, poor, and poorest in an attempt to create a more humane and equitable society by providing a safety net (Barrientos et al., 2005).

Indigence, increased vulnerability, lack of employment opportunities, precariousness in job creation, substandard living wages, spatial displacement, and deterioration of income distribution are viewed as social ills to be relegated to poverty alleviation programs, but the root cause, the very economic policies that contribute to the “ills,” remained intact. As the government reduced its public goods provisioning and service delivery role and as economic outcomes failed to promote a more equitable and just society, inequalities ended up rising and, thus, much of social protection policy pointed towards compensatory measures and away from entitlements. The problem at hand, in our view, centres on a disconnect of instruments and targets. By assigning to social policy what was the outcome of economic policy, we end up with ineffective interventions (Antonopoulos and Fontana, 2006; Razavi and Hassim, 2006).

This period, at best, has been shown to have had mixed results, with only some groups being net gainers, while the majority lagged behind (Wade, 2004; Cornia, 2004; Milanovic, 2003). Structural reforms associated with the Washington Consensus did not result in the kind of economic growth that met the demands of the population. This realization gave rise in the past to popular protests against structural adjustment, as well as to early empirical work that documented its devastating social effects and overall deleterious impact on vast numbers of people (Cornia et al., 1987). Fiscal restraint and the drive to streamline government spending led, as we mentioned above, to a shift away from public-sector provisioning and towards “self reliance,” in tandem with private- and volunteer-sector provisioning. At present, a post-Washington Consensus has opened up space for policy reversals in which government spending is seen, in many instances, as necessary and desirable (Sacks et al., 2004; Roy, 2006) If there is renewed policy space, what will be the best possible arrangements for such provisioning from the point of view of reducing unpaid care work burdens?

## **6.2 What type of state (welfare-promoting) policy is best?**

We argued in earlier sections that burdens of unpaid work and unpaid care work could be reduced through creation of infrastructure and social service delivery.<sup>33</sup> In this short note we cannot do justice to the complex literature on alternate institutional frameworks of

<sup>33</sup> In the areas of health, education, early childhood development, water and sanitation access, road construction, etc.

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welfare regimes.<sup>34</sup> Instead, we will highlight some differences among policy options, classifying them as: (a) universal coverage/direct state-service provisioning; (b) employment guarantee/job-creation based; (c) family-based cash transfers/targeted; and (d) family-work reconciliation policies.

Rather than asking “which one is best for women performing unpaid work,” we will attempt to make some observations that help contextualize their potential effects within diverse frameworks and policy spaces. If a country is facing underemployment and unemployment, and is willing to engage in public work programs, we need to identify (from a gender point of view) the interventions that can ameliorate burdens on women; if social cash transfers are used to improve human development indicators, it is useful to investigate how and when they are also helpful in addressing unpaid care work. When universal provisioning is a viable option, we need to ensure that policies are mindful of existing inequalities in paid and unpaid work.

**(a) *Universal provisioning***

A most common example of universal coverage of social service delivery is the Nordic model.<sup>35</sup> Since the 1960s, it has been based on the state becoming a direct provider of childcare, after-school programs, eldercare, and health and education services. These are not targeted to the disenfranchised, but rather are meant as universal entitlements. This model stands in direct opposition to the US tax credit programs and school vouchers that provide an allowance to families, allowing them “market choice,” in which case the market system remains the main provider. It is also quite different from the corporatist model, i.e., where much of the same services are provided by corporations to their employees, supported sometimes by state tax credits.<sup>36</sup> The Nordic system is combined with generous parental paid leave and other tax incentives that have indeed resulted in lowering unpaid-work reproductive burdens for women somewhat, but primarily they have resulted in higher labour-market participation rates for women. In addition, the majority of the state-employed workers who provide the caring are women and that has raised concerns among some researchers (Razavi and Hassim, 2006).

If such state policies end up releasing women’s time to paid work (market or state) in stereotypical “female” caring jobs, should we be alarmed? Is it not the same as performing unpaid (care) work? This is a subject for debate, but it is our view that the two are quite different experiences, as the social relations, conditions, and entitlements within which the same task is performed differ. It is also interesting to note that although Sweden has a high level of gender occupational segregation, it also has the smallest gender-based wage gap in the world.

**(b) *Employment guarantee/job creation based***

Many low-income countries, in addition to large deficits in social services, face a severe lack of basic physical infrastructure. Water delivery systems, electrification, roads construction, drainage and sanitation, and buildings for schooling and health services are in short supply. More often than not, long, unpaid work hours co-exist with deficits in employment, especially for unskilled workers. Faced with structural constraints and insufficient demand for labour, some groups of people are disproportionately excluded

<sup>34</sup> These are rooted in theories of social choice, welfarist, rights-based, capabilities and functionings, and horizontal versus vertical equity, see Anthony Giddens (1998); Esping-Andersen (1999); Nussbaum and Sen (1993); UNRISD project on *Gender and Social Policy*, Razavi (2007).

<sup>35</sup> Sweden is not alone in this category. In addition to Finland, Norway, and Denmark, many European countries provide universal coverage in health, education, etc., but to varying degrees.

<sup>36</sup> These entitlements remain tied to employment status.

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from productive, remunerative employment. Asymmetries in educational attainment and skills further exacerbate their plight. In such instances, employment guarantee policies (namely the idea of government as employer of last resort) represent a powerful policy intervention and India, South Africa, Argentina, Chile, Zambia, and Bolivia are some of the countries that have enacted such policies. In some countries such interventions have taken the form of employment-intensive infrastructure projects<sup>37</sup> that substitute labour for machines within the same budgetary allocation for creation of public physical assets, such as roads in many African countries. A case in point here is the *Expanded Public Works Programme* in South Africa. In other cases, projects are devised that guarantee a fixed number of workdays, as through the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* in rural India, which constitutionally mandates a hundred days of work per annum to rural, poor, unemployed workers.

An important but overlooked aspect of these initiatives is that female participation rates have very often been high, which points to the existence of unemployment among women, but also to hidden unemployment in the form of what is commonly referred to as the “inactive” population. In Maharashtra, India, women comprise 53 per cent of the program participants and earn about 30 per cent of household income (Engkvist, 1995). Chile’s Minimum Employment Program (PEM), originally set up in 1975, had reached a 73 per cent female participation rate by 1987 (Buvinic, 1996). When the Jefes program was introduced in Argentina in 2001, it anticipated that 400,000 heads of households would participate, but to the surprise of officials, it reached close to two million people or 5 per cent of the population (Tcherneva and Wray, 2005). In a year’s time, 75 per cent of registered participants were women. These programs therefore enhance employment opportunities for women.

Public employment guarantee programs have generally invested much more in infrastructure projects, such as construction and maintenance of roads, and have placed less emphasis on projects that provide *social services* or those that target *the efficiency and enhancement of public service delivery*.<sup>38</sup> Building a hospital will not be sufficient unless its staffing includes nurses’ aides and personnel that clean and sanitize the premises, prepare the meals, and assist the patients with daily functions. Encouraging educational attainment will require the construction of the physical space and the presence of a teacher, but school attendance will be enhanced if girls are not required to help their families take care of the chronically ill at home by fetching water and providing care, as is often the case in many parts of the world in households with members inflicted with the HIV/AIDS virus. Implementation of these programs, when they address infrastructural deficits in public service, will benefit women and children by alleviating work that is drudgery and places disproportionate time burdens on them.

Despite the high participation rates of women in these programs, there has not been adequate cross-country evaluation of the extent to which these programs are gender-informed in design and implementation. And in those cases when references are made to gender equity, the issues discussed pertain to facilitating women’s participation and access to these public jobs (i.e. supply of labour issues) such as childcare arrangements, distance of the sites of employment from home residences, gender-based wage differentials, etc.<sup>39</sup> These are very important issues, but we must also introduce as an evaluative criterion the

<sup>37</sup> See ILO, EIIP; [www.ilo.org/eiip](http://www.ilo.org/eiip).

<sup>38</sup> One exception is the Jefes program in Argentina; a large number of projects are designed specifically to cater to community needs by providing a wide range of goods and services (Tcherneva and Wray, 2005). Also recently some opening has been created within the Expanded Public Works Programmes (EPWP) in South Africa.

<sup>39</sup> For work that explicitly addresses differential impacts on men and women, see Tcherneva and Wray (2005) and Krishnaraj et al. (2004).



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degree to which these public employment programs create jobs in economic sectors and occupations that reduce the amount of free “subsidies” the unpaid work of women provides at the moment (King Dejardin, 1996; Antonopoulos and Fontana, 2006) These newly created employment opportunities can serve as a vehicle for transforming women’s lives by reducing the unpaid work burden and, thus, altering the paid-unpaid gender division of labour.

In some cases this will translate to prioritizing public investment in infrastructure that reduces unpaid work, such as rural water projects, feeder roads, and building separate latrines in schools for girls and boys, which will reduce the time allocated to fetching water and walking children to school, as well as allow female students to go to school. In other instances it will require investing directly in work activities that are “invisible”: childcare, elder care, and care for the chronically ill. To truly benefit those most in need, projects will have to be context-specific and the best way to guarantee this is by participatory community-based project design processes that directly engage with women and women’s groups.

Public job guarantee programs designed with these concerns in mind will have three distinct benefits. First, they will generate income for participants, simultaneously setting a wage floor for all, including some benefits (depending on the design of the program). These newly created jobs may or may not be always filled by women. It could be that women are the ones employed as construction workers while young men provide home-based care to the chronically ill. But in all cases, in addition to income, capacity building and skill acquisition will be gained to varying degrees. Second, the goods and services delivered will become part of the basket of consumption for underserved communities and populations, in itself a contribution to pro-poor development. Third, and quite significant for promoting gender equality, this may turn out to be a very powerful redistributive policy of unpaid work burdens. The importance of employment guarantee programs in our context is that, if well designed, they can reduce unpaid work while redistributing the cost of reproduction by creating jobs for both women and men instead of reinforcing the existing gender-based division of unpaid labour. If such projects are not gender-informed, the danger is that they may create a typical “double” day effect for women.

**(c) *Family-based cash transfers/targeted***

The next intervention is one that provides a grant to targeted poor households with children, on the condition that in exchange for a monthly cash (transfer) payment the mother of the child will engage in human capital investments that promote the child’s welfare in the short run and employability in the long run. Practically, this type of intervention provides incentives to women to engage in unpaid work activities that are mainly focused on securing school attendance for their children, as well as scheduling and accompanying them for regular health check-ups. The cash transfers also result in higher food consumption for children and for their families, a clear and important benefit against material deprivation. Cases in point are the *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil and *Oportunidades* (formerly *PROGRESA*) in Mexico, but similar programs abound in other countries including Colombia, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Turkey (Rawlings, 2005). In terms of increasing enrolment rates and improving preventive health care there is little debate that the intervention yields positive outcomes, even at times of negative economic shocks (Attanasio et al., 2005, 2006); questions remain, however.

Conditional transfer programs stem from the concept of social protection as human capital investment. Their premise is that the reproduction of poverty across generations is due to a lack of investment in human capital and they seek to enhance access to basic services and prevent the use of strategies with adverse long-term consequences, such as child labour. These interventions aim at, and are quite effective in, influencing behavioural patterns and enhancing the demand poor households have for educational and health services. They provide the cash income to do so and the incentive to participate in the program, as they reduce overall vulnerability and risk for the duration of participation. But, by design, they are not able to address the existing shortages in the available supply of social services and

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infrastructure. If this is the case, to give an example, a family that benefits from participating in a cash transfer program will still be in need of fetching wood, collecting water, and taking care of infants. To meet household unpaid work needs, increased levels of school attendance may come at the expense of children's free time. This is not to suggest that a cash transfer is not beneficial to the family. Rather it serves the purpose of highlighting that unpaid work requirements for the social reproduction of the household will still place burdens on women and children with the potentially adverse effects of time stress and deprivation of sleep or free time for children, which turned out to be the case in cash transfer projects in Bangladesh (Ravallion and Wodon, 1999).<sup>40</sup> ECLAC (2002) and Britto (2005) have also warned that there is no guarantee that greater educational attainment will reduce intergenerational poverty. This would require school attendance rates to be accompanied by skill formation that matches conditions for labour demand. Higher monetary incomes, in the long term, depend on employment opportunities and, in the context of recent global trends, in the growth-employment nexus this is far from assured.

In addition, gender-sensitive beneficiary assessments raise a crucial issue related to the unequal impacts of such programs in sharing the responsibilities required by the program activities. For example, it is argued that despite its principle aim to empower female beneficiaries,<sup>41</sup> the *Oportunidades* program in Mexico results in extra burden of work and time for many women since certain program activities often require them to travel to attend health centres, education and nutrition workshops, or to receive payments (ECLAC 2007).

More significantly, attention has been drawn to the ways in which women in such programs seem to be "primarily positioned as a means to secure program objectives; they are a *conduit of policy*, in the sense that resources channelled through them are expected to translate into greater improvements in the well-being of children and the family as a whole" (Molyneux, 2006). Women may be happy to contribute their time to their children's future (though not in having their mothering roles regulated in the way the program does), but they still need programs that can further their own economic security through training and links to employment (Razavi, 2007). In short, there is little in the design of the program that can further women's economic security, and "scant, if any, childcare provision for those women who want or need it because they work, train, or study" (Razavi, 2007). Despite stated aims of "empowering women," the success of the program has depended on "fortifying and normalizing the responsibilities of motherhood as a way to secure program goals" (Molyneux, 2006: 440).

<sup>40</sup> According to some researchers, higher demand for education generates negative externalities in the form of lower service delivery if supply remains constant, suggesting a need for compensatory supply expansion (Villatoro, 2005). It is also argued that an expanded supply of education, i.e. new buildings closer to place of residence providing greater accessibility, training early-childhood educators, etc. may be more needed and cost-effective than conditional transfers as a way of improving education for poor families (Coady and Parker, 2002; Skoufias and Parker, 2001; Hirway, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> Payments are made only to mothers and grants given to girls are 10 per cent higher than those for boys.

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(d) **Family-work reconciliation policies and unpaid care work<sup>42</sup>**

From a historical perspective, the origins of the work-family conflict can be traced to the separation of home and workplace, as well as the increasing labour force participation rates of women (Hein, 2005). When coupled with declining availability of extended family assistance and kin networks due to migration, urbanization, and the increasing care needs of the elderly – itself an outcome of increasing life expectancy – extraordinary pressures are placed on families to provide care. Typically longer working hours and two wage-earner family trends in recent times (Kodz et al., 2002; Duxbury and Higgins, 2003) serve to only aggravate the situation. For low-income workers, travel time has increased due to an explosion of real estate markets that ever-expanding urbanization brings about. Unskilled, low-pay workers in Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City, for instance, spend around four hours a day on public transportation (Moghadam, 1998; Peters, 1998; Williams, 1998). In other parts of the world, HIV/AIDS has increased time-stress (Akintola, 2006; ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, 2004).

The main aim of reconciliation policies has been to create effective equality opportunity and treatment for men and women in the labour market. These policies are crucial first and foremost in promoting equality, but recently the role of such policies has also been gaining recognition by employers. Reducing work-family conflict is in the interest of higher productivity, lower turnover rates and costs, and reducing absenteeism (Dench et al., 2000; Duxbury and Higgins, 2003). Furthermore “since employment diversity is an important issue, such policies can also help businesses to attract and recruit employees from a larger pool of the labour force.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, for some employers, these policies form a way of creating and maintaining competitiveness.

Reconciling work and family responsibilities is also of concern for male workers. Reducing work-family conflict should not only be perceived as women-friendly, as noted by Hein (2005); the family roles of men and appreciation of work-family policies by men are now increasingly recognized and “fathering” programs reduce turnover rates of employees in male-dominated sectors as well (Hein 2005: 62). In addition, trade union organizations are increasingly taking into account work-family issues in collective bargaining agreements. For example, the fact that family responsibilities may constitute a barrier to trade union membership for women and/or restrict their active involvement in union activities has been recently of great concern. It has also been mentioned that this issue may be taken up by unions. Given the current economic climate, there might be more scope for non-wage benefits (rather than wage gains) in collective bargaining (Hein 2005: 35).

Ability to cope with work-family conflicts is influenced by several measures related to working time arrangements and leave entitlements, as well as measures related to care. Hein (2005) collects different kinds of measures into three main types as: *establishing*

<sup>42</sup> Reconciling work and family responsibilities has been a major concern of the ILO since the adoption of the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 3) in 1919. Later, in 1965, a *Recommendation on Women with Family Responsibilities* was introduced, but it was later also recognized that many of the measures under this recommendation reinforced the traditional role of women as natural providers of care for their families, implicitly divesting men of such responsibilities. Being replaced in 1981 by the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention* (No. 156) and *Recommendation* (No. 165), equality of opportunity and treatment of female and male workers was finally introduced. Yet, very few governments have adopted and implemented an explicit national policy concerning male and female workers with family responsibilities in line with the *Convention* (ILO 1993: 23). Since these conventions were adopted in 1981, rising attention has been directed towards this issue. Concerns have been raised regarding the conflicting nature between work and family responsibilities and, hence, the need to reconcile family and work life.

<sup>43</sup> Arthur and Cook (2004) report that the introduction of family-friendly initiatives announced in *Wall Street Journal* increased the value of a said firm in the stock market.

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*routines* (often on a daily basis, but sometimes on a weekly or yearly basis) so that both work commitments and family responsibilities can be met satisfactorily and with minimum stress; *coping with major family events*, such as childbirth or long illness of a close family member that require temporary arrangements of a prolonged duration, and *coping with short-term emergencies* or unpaid care demands that may require one's time, such as a sick child or an elderly relative who needs to be taken to the doctor.

## 7. Existing methodologies on data collection, production, and analysis on unpaid care work<sup>44</sup>

The main tool for collecting information on unpaid work is Time-Use Surveys (TUS). It was argued in earlier sections that better understanding of the macro economy, economic modelling that incorporates unpaid work, and expanded poverty measures that take into account unpaid work can be constructed if time-use data become available. Such improved tools and indicators can provide important inputs in assessing the impact of economic changes and policies, particularly from a gender point of view.

Historically, time-use statistics were first produced in the early years of the twentieth century in social surveys reporting on the living conditions of working class families. Later on, in the 1920s, time-use surveys were carried out in some centrally planned economies, as well as in some industrialized countries (the United Kingdom and the United States) for different specific purposes. The first multinational comparative time-use research project in the 1960s included conducting time-use surveys in twelve European countries, with the main objective of understanding the use of free time by people on hobbies and recreation, mass media, and child care. It was only in the 1970s that unpaid domestic work got the attention of policy makers and statisticians, as well as the women's movement in industrialized countries. A large number of industrialized countries, such as the UK, Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Japan, Australia, Canada, etc. started conducting periodical time-use surveys to understand and estimate the contribution of unpaid work of men and particularly women to the total well-being of people. While estimating the contribution of unpaid work still remains important, over the years, the purpose of conducting time-use surveys has expanded to shedding light on a variety of diverse socio-economic conditions. Today, most industrialized countries are conducting periodical time-use surveys with multiple objectives.

In the case of developing countries, a large number of countries located in Asia, Africa, and Latin America have conducted their first time-use survey by now. Included are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Lao PDR, South Korea, Benin, Guinea, Mali, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, Chad, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, and Nicaragua. Except for Benin, no other country has conducted a second time-use survey so far. Though several scholars have analyzed time-use statistics to understand different aspects of time use and discussions on methodological issues have been taking place, these surveys are not yet well established or institutionalized in the national statistical system of developing countries.

Most of these surveys also lack in conceptual clarity, methodological rigor, and data quality. As a result, we do not have comparable data on time spent on different activities and, particularly, unpaid work; however, the surveys have shed very useful light on unpaid economic and non-economic work carried out in developing countries.

<sup>44</sup> This section draws on previous work including a research proposal document prepared by the author and Indira Hirway, as well as on a background paper prepared for a Levy Institute coordinated project on "Impact Assessment of Employment Guarantee Policies" by Indira Hirway.

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## 7.1 Unpaid work, paid work, and time-use studies

Though time-use studies were first used in the earlier years of the twentieth century as a means of understanding peoples' lifestyles, over the years they have emerged as an important tool for: (1) measuring unpaid domestic and voluntary work of men and women; (2) measuring paid (i.e. economic) work of men and women in the informal sector, including the household sector; and (3) getting a comprehensive picture of the activities of men and women in economic and non-economic (falling within the general production boundary) spheres and in personal services. Time-use data are thus seen as an important part of many national statistical systems.

During the last few decades a particular interest emerged from within feminist groups in industrialized countries in the North to measure the "invisible" unpaid *care* work of women to assess both the emerging "double day" and to estimate women's contribution to human welfare. Subsequently, time-use surveys emerged as a tool of projecting the uneven distribution of total (paid and unpaid) work between men and women in an economy.

The developing countries, however, saw that time-use surveys can also shed useful light not only on the "paid work," but also on much of unpaid work. The latter is frequently not well recorded in these countries due to extended prevalence of informal conditions of work and accompanying conceptual and methodological limitations in conventional data-collection systems. Time-use surveys, which collect data on how people spend their time, could help in overcoming these conceptual and methodological problems if the time-use information is collected carefully and it is analyzed systematically using a good classification of activities. This new application of time-use surveys for estimating and understanding the characteristics of the workforce engaged in economic work is now seen as relevant to industrialized countries also. This is because the labour markets in these countries, under increasing flexibilization, have a variety of production organizations with a wide range of work-time arrangements that cannot be captured through conventional surveys. Since women predominate as flexible labour (i.e. as part-time, home-based, casual, or temporary workers), time-use surveys are extremely relevant to understand gender differences in labour market status of workers.

Recently time-use surveys have also been recognized as a tool that provides comprehensive information on human life. Human activities can be broadly divided into three categories: economic activities, i.e. the activities falling within the production boundary of the UN System of National Accounts (UN-SNA) (as discussed earlier); unpaid activities falling outside the production boundary, mainly domestic services, voluntary services, etc.; and personal care and leisure activities, like sleeping, watching TV, etc. that cannot be delegated to others. Though all the three categories of activities contribute to human well-being and, though national policies, impact on all the categories of activities, many national statistical offices still collect data only on marketized and fully reported activities, and national policies are formulated and monitored using this partial picture. This approach of using a partial picture for formulating policies that affect the entire economy or society does not seem to be appropriate; since unpaid activities are performed predominantly by women, it undermines women's interests. Time-use survey technique is therefore needed to get a comprehensive picture of the activities of men and women.

## 7.2 Time-use studies improve estimates of macro variables

Information on how people spend their time on the different paid and unpaid activities can be used in getting improved estimates of some macro variables, which, in turn, can also be useful in macroeconomic modelling. The macro variables are: (1) workforce estimates; (2) national income estimates; (3) valuation of "unpaid" work; and (4) national time accounts.

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**(a) *Improving workforce estimates***

Workforce, particularly in developing economies, is underestimated in “difficult to measure sectors” like subsistence sector, home-based work, home work, and other informal sector activities as: (1) the nature of work in these activities gets mixed with household work and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two; (2) informal sector units are small/tiny, temporary, scattered, and uncertain; (3) workers, mainly women, frequently suffer from socio-cultural biases that prevent them from reporting their economic work correctly; (4) investigators also frequently suffer from socio-cultural biases that prevent them from reporting women’s work accurately; and (5) work in the subsistence sector is many times not reported adequately as conventional surveys fail to report this work accurately. Time-use surveys can get over these difficulties if these are organized well. In India, for example, workforce estimates based on time-use surveys have proven to be more accurate.

**(b) *Improving national income estimates***

There are three major sectors/subsectors that are underestimated or not estimated in national income estimates: (1) informal economy; (2) production for self consumption, i.e., subsistence economy; and (3) underground or illegal economy. The main reason for this non- /under-estimation is the lack of adequate statistics. *Contribution of informal sector activities* is frequently compiled by multiplying the number of workers in each of the activities with its average production (which is calculated by conducting special surveys). The total contribution of each of the activities is then added up to arrive at the total contribution of the informal sector to the national GDP. Time-use surveys are useful in improving these data as they can provide better estimates of workers for the different informal sector activities. *Contribution of the subsistence sector to national income* can also be improved by using time-use data. The production boundary for the purpose of estimating National Accounts (UN-SNA) was expanded in 1993 to cover non-marketed production for own consumption. It is difficult to estimate the production for self-consumption, through conventional surveys, as frequently these activities get mixed with unpaid domestic services and conventional surveys find it difficult to collect data on how many persons spend time on subsistence activities and how much they produce for self-consumption, etc. A time-use survey is a suitable survey for collection of these data, as they collect comprehensive information on how people spend their time on difficult activities and how much they produce (collected through the suitable context variables).

**(c) *Valuation of unpaid work/satellite accounts***

Unpaid domestic services are outside the purview of national income according to the 1993 UN-SNA. However, these services contribute to human well-being in several ways. Since women are predominant in these services, it is important to estimate their contribution to the total welfare of the economy. That is, valuation of unpaid domestic services is essential for making visible women’s contribution to total welfare. However, there are several conceptual and methodological problems in this valuation: (1) many domestic services do not have market prices available for valuation, as these activities are never marketed; (2) domestic services are performed in a non-competitive, non-market environment and therefore it is not valid to use market prices to value these activities; and (3) the concept of time in the unpaid domestic sector is elastic, as the same work can be done in different time periods. In spite of these problems, attempts have been made to value these activities using the following approaches:

**Input method:** According to this method, the time input in unpaid work is valued by multiplying it with an appropriate wage rate. The kinds of wages used are the specialized wage rate, generalized wage rate, and opportunity cost. This approach has several limitations, as it ignores the role of capital in the production.

**Output method:** According to this method, unpaid work is presented in output terms (for example, so many meals prepared, so many clothes washed, etc.) so as to compute its value

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by multiplying the output produced with market prices. This approach also has several limitations, as not all domestic services can be converted into output. Also, the value of output needs to be expressed in terms of value-added.

**Households input/output tables or national accounts of household economy:** This is essentially an extension of SNA to include unpaid household productive activities of men and women in a system of “household” accounts, which will be separate from, but consistent with, the main accounts. That is, these will be presented in satellite accounts.

*Satellite National Time Accounts* are essentially income and expenditure accounts of time, similar to the estimates of national income and expenditure that account for market transactions in monetary terms. The accounts present how households allocate time between paid work, unpaid work, and leisure according to the standard categories of industrial activities (for paid work) and standard categories of household production and leisure. A system of national time accounts would provide a basis for international comparisons and for greatly improved modelling of economic and social systems. Regular national time accounts present a more complete perspective and understanding of the role of household in the total economy, productive activities, and leisure activities, as well as the interaction between the household and the market. So far, countries like the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, etc. have compiled national time accounts.

### 7.3 Time-use surveys: concepts and methodologies

The concepts and methods of conducting time-use surveys are still not well established at the global level. One observes a variety of concepts and methods used in conducting time-use surveys. The variations are observed particularly in: (1) objectives; (2) nature of the surveys (i.e. independent survey or attached to other major survey); (3) background schedule; (4) methods of time-use data collections; (5) context variables; (6) classification of activities; and (7) data analysis and use. Some work has been initiated by the UN Statistical Division, ILO, International Association of Time-Use Research (IATUR), etc. to standardize these concepts and methods. It will be useful to survey the literature carefully and further the process of harmonization of concepts and methods at the global level.

**What do time-use data tell us?** Information collected through time-use surveys has three components: (1) information collected through the background schedule, i.e. the socio-economic information on the background of the respondent; (2) the time-use pattern of the respondent, i.e. the details about how the respondent has spent his/her time; and (3) the context of the time-use activities through contextual variables. The background schedule collects all the relevant information on the respondents depending on the objectives of the survey. Generally it collects information about the socio-economic characteristics of the household, as well as the individual and any other information that can be related to their time use to understand the time use better. For example, the background information can help in analyzing the time-use patterns of the poor and non-poor, of men and women, of children going to school and not going to school, a married woman or a single woman, different ethnic groups, etc. The time-use survey component collects detailed information on how individuals spend their time on a daily and weekly basis, while contextual variables basically provide the context of time-use activities. Contextual variables improve information collected about the activities in a manner that the utility of the information on the time use is enhanced considerably. The major contextual variables concern: (a) the location of time-use activities (for example, whether the activity is performed inside or outside home); (b) for whom or for what purpose is the activity performed (for example, whether the activity is for self-consumption or for sale); (c) the activity is performed with whom or accompanied by whom (for example, whether the activity is performed with children, adults, or others); and (d) any other characteristics of time-use activities, such as whether the activity is paid (remunerated directly) or unpaid. The background schedule, the comprehensive details of the time use, and the context of the activities together provide a wealth of information that has immense possibilities of uses for different purposes.

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Time-use surveys need not be independent surveys. They can be linked to relate the time-use information with other relevant areas of study. For example, it can be a module in a labour and employment survey (as was done for Benin and Nepal), it can be a module of a survey on living conditions (as in the case of Guatemala), or it can be a module in an expenditure and consumption survey (as in the cases of Lao PDR and Oman).

Several measurements, indicators, and indices can be developed to use these data meaningfully. In this paper we will discuss the issues relating to the use of time-use data: in: (1) accurately estimating the GDP; (2) monetary valuation of unpaid work; and (3) preparing national time accounts and time-based social indicators.

**Improved measurement of gross domestic product using time-use statistics:** The problem areas for the estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) in an economy are the areas of the non-observed economy, namely, underground production/informal production and subsistence production (OECD, 2002). Underground production is defined as production that is legal, but is deliberately concealed from the public authorities to avoid payment of taxes or complying with regulations. A part of the underground production comes from self-employed workers and production units who subcontract their work to workers at home. Informal sector production is the production that is undertaken by unincorporated enterprises in the household sector. These units are generally unregistered and have a very small size. Subsistence production or production of households for their own final use is the production of goods and services consumed or capitalized by the households that produce them.

In the case of the informal economy, the major problems with respect to data are under-coverage of enterprises, underreporting of enterprises, and non-response of enterprises. This is primarily because the informal economy, which is highly heterogeneous, covers a large variety of economic activities, such as: own-account workers (self-employed) managing their own enterprises; persons engaged in petty trade, petty manufacturing, and petty services; home-workers and home-based workers who are partly piece-rated wage earners and partly informal enterprises; and other informal workers engaged in small and petty economic activities. Since these activities are short term, temporary, scattered, and sporadic, they are not captured adequately by conventional surveys.

As a result, a common practice in several developing economies is to estimate the average production of workers by conducting special surveys for the sectors in which the informal economy is operating and multiplying the production with the number of workers employed in the sector. The employment data are captured through conventional employment/labour force surveys. Such an approach, however, frequently leads to underestimation of the output, as the conventional labour force surveys are observed to be underreporting workers (Hirway, 2002).

Time-use surveys are expected to net the informal workers adequately. Since time-use surveys collect comprehensive information about how people spend their time on different activities, a good classification of activities can provide improved estimates of workers who are employed temporarily, seasonally, or sporadically as self-employed, unpaid family workers, casual labour, home workers, or home-based workers. Improved estimates of workers, then, leads to improved estimates of production from a number of activities located in the informal economy.

It is frequently argued that adding supplementary questions to labour force surveys will provide correct estimates of informal workers. It is also argued that adding supplementary questions to household income and expenditure surveys will provide data on goods and services produced by the informal sector. However, past experience tells us that time-use data clearly have an advantage in getting improved estimates of workers engaged in the different sectors of the informal economy (Hirway, 2003; Charmes, 2006). There can be two approaches to estimating additions to the GDP: (1) independent valuation from the informal economy and (2) improving existing estimates by using improved estimates of the



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work force engaged in the different sectors of the informal economy. Unfortunately, none of these have been tried out in any country so far.<sup>45</sup>

**Valuation of unpaid SNA and non-SNA work:** Valuation of unpaid work is an area of extensive debate in the literature and there are experts who argue against valuation on the grounds that the underlying assumptions are highly unrealistic, while on the other hand, elaborate methodologies for valuation have been presented and used.

The first set of issues arises in the context of questioning the efficacy of the methodology involved in assigning monetary value (shadow prices, so to speak) to unpaid work. Economic work in the market place is performed under competitive conditions, where efficiency and productivity matter, while household work (and voluntary work) is carried out within the household environment where there is no pressure of competitive forces. Commodification through market exchange processes is essential for price/value formation; when there is no exchange, it is difficult to put any value to that activity.

In addition, valuation of unpaid work entails a large number of assumptions, such as whether the quality of household services remains the same for all households. Serious problems also arise in regard to the availability of the required data and about the methodology of valuation. Do cooked meals and care provided to children, etc. have the same quality in each household? Is the quality of the home-produced service similar to that in the market? Should one use the replacement market wage rate of a domestic worker or of a specialist (i.e. a chef or a cook)? Is the childcare provided by a mother with a low literacy level versus one who is a Ph.D. holder of the same valuation? No standard methodologies have been developed so far. In fact, different methods are likely to give different values of the same service; for example, fetching water can be the value of the time spent on fetching water (computed on the basis of the time spent) or the value of the water (production cost of water). The input method will measure the burden, while the output method will value the product.

In spite of these problems, valuation of unpaid work is essential on the following grounds:

- Like economic work, unpaid work contributes to human well-being. In many economies, unpaid SNA and non-SNA work accounts for the lion share of the access to means of survival for the majority of the population. In fact, the contribution of unpaid work is fairly comparable with that of the economic work insofar as securing basic needs. If we need an aggregate variable to measure the total well-being in any economy, it is important to value the unpaid work component.
- The valuation will give visibility to the unpaid work in official statistics (time accounting will not do it). This will provide the basis for unpaid workers to claim entitlements and their due share in the budgetary allocations to improve the productivity of their work and conditions of work. The valuation will be a formal recognition given to unpaid work in macroeconomics and macroeconomic policy making.
- Though unpaid work is not exchanged in the market, it is not free. It has a cost, as it uses human capital plus other capital like space, equipment, facilities, etc. Unpaid work is also not unlimited; there is a limit to it. In a strict sense, therefore, unpaid work is an economic good and it needs to be valued.
- An important implication of the valuation of unpaid work will be for women and the poor, as unpaid work is a major constraint to their development opportunities. Valuation of unpaid work will make their contribution visible, highlight the unjust inequalities, and justify measures to promote gender equality and poverty reduction.

<sup>45</sup> An expert committee of the Department of Statistics, Government of India, has recently finalized the classification of time-use activities in a manner that will help in estimating employment in the informal sector.

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- There are some other important implications of the valuation. First, the valuation of unpaid work contributed by a woman will improve her claim to entitlements, social insurance, access to pensions, and to compensation in the case of divorce. Unpaid female workers in rural Greece, for example, receive old age pensions and by now have access to health benefits in their own right. The Republic of Korea is considering introduction of these measures as well. The valuation will also help in the engenderment of national budgets, as it will justify larger allocations to women's development and empowerment.

As is well known, national income estimates are not only macro-level estimates of the total well-being, but they also form the basis for measuring and monitoring the performance of an economy. The SNA (1993) has correctly recommended valuation of unpaid work and compilation of satellite accounts for unpaid work, and this is also the case of the Platform for Action Recommendations of the Beijing World Conference on Women, which has also included this valuation in its official document (UN-ESCAP, 2003).

## **Part II: Recommendations**

### **1. Better design, more frequent collection, and wider application of time-use data**

Taking into consideration the paid/unpaid work nexus suggests that inequality, poverty, and any assessment of economic policy (and reforms) requires a more comprehensive framework. At the macro level, such evaluation requires that we create a model of the economy in ways that capture: (a) contribution of unpaid work to GDP and (b) not only changes in growth, prices, external and internal deficits, and exchange rate fluctuations, but also on overall production of output generated via unpaid work assisted by creating satellite accounts.

Inequality and poverty should include estimates of time poverty and unequal distribution of unpaid work time. Ideally, a macro-micro framework would be able to combine the two aspects mentioned above. Such a framework is possible by creating gender-aware (time and value) input-output tables for Social Accounting Matrix analysis. Separate tables would further keep track of household level and intergroup (women/men) differences.

Just as a policy example, the removal of food price subsidies is usually analyzed in terms of shifts in money income and consumption levels, which serve as indicators of the impact on living standards. However, changes in household income and consumption do not adequately convey the other important changes that also may have resulted from such a policy. Existing welfare indicators do not take into account the serious consequences of longer hours of household work, reduction in sleeping hours, or increased time spent on multiple and simultaneous activities – all of which have implications for the well-being of men and, more particularly, women and children in poor households. The absence of data on increased unpaid work, overlapping tasks, and their impact on health is likely to give a false impression of the effectiveness of the policy reforms, disregarding the effects on those who are likely to be both “time poor” and “cash poor.” It will therefore be necessary to develop new indicators to monitor progress in time allocation. Some of the indicators could be (ESCAP, 2003):

- total time spent by men and women on SNA and non-SNA activities;
- the share of unpaid work in the total work performed by men and women;
- time spent on multiple activities (per week), indicating time stress;
- personal time enjoyed by men and women; and

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- time spent by children working.

Therefore, governments and institutions need to develop mechanisms that will monitor the impact of policies and programs on unpaid work. Better design of surveys and more frequent time-use data collection will be an important first step.

The most important aspect of promoting policy action on unpaid work is examining the process that will increase public understanding of the issues and concerns, and mobilizing those persons who have the power to transform time-use data into an agenda for women and men whose unpaid work has not been counted (UN-ESCAP, 2003).

## 2. Further research on family-work reconciliation policies and unpaid care work

As argued in Section 4, family-work reconciliation policies are progressively being embraced as a key response to promote equal opportunity and treatment for men and women in the labour market. These policies are important, but “reconciling work and family responsibilities” may well turn out to be too *women-friendly* in practice, leaving intact the gender-based division of labour that has been traditionally and unfairly embedded in paid/unpaid work, as well as unquestioning the very meaning of “family responsibility.” To promote gender equality, reconciliation policies must be combined with options that aim to create alternatives to family-centric social reproduction. Flexible arrangements may be an advance over rigid schedules, but not if it is mostly women who take “advantage” of them. In any event, the point is that public debate is taking place around these issues and it needs to continue.

There are still many difficulties that need to be addressed, particularly with respect to the gendered nature of work, as well as the differences in the nature of work in developing countries vis-à-vis developed countries. Moreover, research evidence on earlier experiences confirms many problems in practice, both in designing and implementing these measures. In practice, measures to reduce work-family conflicts and protect workers with family obligations can turn out to reinforce the gender distribution of household responsibilities if policies are not designed to challenge the ideal worker model, i.e. as one dedicated to the firm or one that is devoid of “other” responsibilities. Employers end up discriminating against women, as for example the case in Korea, reconstituting unpaid work as the primary domain of labour activities for women (Sung, 2003).

The ILO (2003: 75) report *Time for Equality at Work* notes that “there is a danger that as work-family policies are so often aimed implicitly or explicitly at women in particular they may end up reinforcing the image of women as ‘secondary’ earners and accruing to the double burden of working women.” Family responsibilities are still very much assigned to women. When they have to combine child-raising activities with work activities, women are required to find a solution for balancing these two roles. For example, a recent study based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Time-Use Survey shows evidence indicating that compared to fathering, mothering involves not only more overall time commitment, but more multitasking, more physical labour, a more rigid timetable, more time alone with children, and more overall responsibility for managing care (Craig, 2006). The study also shows that this finding applies even when women work full-time.

“Role incompatibility is likely to be a greater problem for women in wage employment, less for those in self-employment, and least for contributing family workers who are unpaid (but still count as employed people according to the standard definition of employment)” (ILO, 2004a: 10). The main examples of countries that have addressed work-family conflicts as part of a gender equality strategy come from the Scandinavian countries, where family policies have converged with equality policies, with the aim of

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encouraging and facilitating greater participation of men in family life and women in employment.<sup>46</sup>

Equally important is the contextualization of such policies in terms of differences between North and the South; there is some, but very little, discussion outside the North about the availability of inexpensive market-based domestic services, which function as a cushion that diminishes family tensions around unpaid work. Although this privilege is available only to the middle and upper classes, they are precisely those most likely to contribute to the debates and to introduce legislation to begin with. Most importantly, the vast majority of poor women in the South find themselves working under informal conditions. This phenomenon requires different thinking and, hence, such programs that are tied to formal employment are irrelevant for them.

Beneria (2007) questions whether the types of legislation that are designed mainly for the North are appropriate for the developing world, particularly for Latin American countries. In answering this question she points out there are three main differences between the North and the South that must be taken into consideration: a) the debates around policies of reconciliation are apparently less urgent than in the countries of the North given the sparse research and practice on developing economies; b) the extent and nature of the informal economy differs in the South (formal and secure work corresponds only to the small portion of population); and c) with globalization, rising feminization of migration has been observed in the South (Beneria, 2007). The implications of this trend in terms of reconciliation policies have been that the need to balance unpaid and paid work in the South shifts away from mothers and younger women who migrate to the North to those who replace them back home. Taking into account such crucial differences between the North and the South there is an urgent need to link reconciliation policies with employment guarantee policies at home (Antonopoulos, 2007) and human development or capabilities approach for women and children (Beneria, 2007).

### **3. Explore the linkages between employment guarantee policies and unpaid work**

Employment guarantee programs can provide support by constructing the required assets and infrastructure that alleviate unpaid work burdens. For example, the programs can build infrastructure like water supply to provide water at the door step, can build assets like farm ponds, minor irrigation works, etc. to enhance productivity of subsistence work, and can regenerate ecosystems that ensure necessities like fuel wood (with the use of fuel-efficient stoves) and raw materials for the large majority of the population that depend on natural resources for their livelihood.

It needs to be underlined, however, that all domestic work cannot be delegated to employment guarantee programs. Each household has a “household overhead time,” i.e. the minimum number of hours that a household must spend on basic chores vital to the survival of the family – activities like cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, fetching water, shopping for necessities, etc. The duration of this time depends on several socio-economic factors, like income and assets of the household, equipment, cultural values and customs, etc. Providing appropriate infrastructure, services, and suitable assets can reduce overhead time of poor households. Employment guarantee programs can help in reducing this time by reducing the drudgery of household work.

<sup>46</sup> See gender equality objectives in Sweden, Hein (2005: 37) and Sweden Ministry of Industry, Employment, and Communications (1999).

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The total effect will be positive in terms of reduction of time stress and increased time for leisure or for productive work, improved productivity of work, and improved health and overall well-being of women, as well as improved access of children to better health, better nutrition, and better education.

To sum up, support can be provided to women (and men) engaged in unpaid drudgery by undertaking the following works/assets in an employment guarantee program.<sup>47</sup>

1. Provision of water supply through constructing water-harvesting structures and also water distribution systems.
2. Planting of trees for fuel wood, along with production of energy-efficient stores.
3. Construction of bio-gas energy plants that use cow dung and produce clean gas as energy for cooking and heating.
4. Construction of child-care facilities for infants (below three years).
5. Construction of preschools for children three to six years old.
6. Construction of primary schools and related infrastructure, such as toilets, provision of water, midday meal kitchens, etc.
7. Construction of dispensaries and health care centres for grown-ups to take care of the sick, old, and the disabled.
8. Improving and expanding government services by constructing additional facilities to reduce waiting time of people.
9. Reducing travel time of people by constructing new roads and improving transportation services.

An important observation emerging from the paper is that women (and poor) in developing economies spend a considerable amount of time on unpaid subsistence work including collection of basic necessities like water, fuel, wood, etc. and unpaid care work. They also spend a good amount of time on travelling. Most of this unpaid work, which involves drudgery, can be turned into productive employment in the mainstream economy through appropriate planning of works under employment guarantee programs. To put it differently, the hidden vacancies can be filled through well-designed employment guarantee programs.

The impact of filling the hidden vacancies can be multifold. On the one hand, it can reduce drudgery and time-stress of men and, particularly, women, as well as alleviate poverty by generating employment and incomes for the poorest at the bottom in the short run and many more poor in the long run and contribute significantly to gender equality. On the other hand, it can modify the course of economic development in developing economies by leading them towards full-employment economies. It can also contribute significantly towards improving the education and nutrition of children and to overall improvement of health, as well as the well-being of women and others.

The paper has indicated that the new database needed for planning for such programs is not readily available. Time-use surveys, along with a sound base of other data, can help considerably in this context. A positive development observed in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America in this context is that many of these countries have conducted, or are in the process of conducting, their first time-use survey. Though there are several gaps in the design of these surveys, data collection methods, and classification of time-use activities, the data gathered by these surveys are adequate to establish the usefulness of such surveys in planning for reducing unpaid drudgery through employment programs.

<sup>47</sup> Hirway (2003 and 2006).

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A lot is to be achieved, however, in terms of improving the methods of conducting time-use surveys to improve the quality of the data. There is a need to conduct these surveys with much more rigorous methods than what are being used at present.

#### **4. Address the needs of paid (informal) care workers: lack of regulation, retirement benefits, and social protection**

One of the “solutions” for better reconciling work with family responsibilities involves more paid employment in caring, but the conditions of work and employment in these jobs often leave much to be desired. Undervaluation of paid care work goes hand in hand with lack of recognition of unpaid care work, which is seen as natural and not requiring skills.

The growth of the care sector has provided more jobs for women, as most of this kind of work is done by women (for example, in the UK it grew by 21 per cent from 1998 to 2002, and only 2 per cent of childcare workers are men). Care workers are among the most poorly paid and have the highest turnover rates. Since it comes as the traditional task of women it is not perceived as requiring skill, but rather something that comes naturally to women; it is barely recognized as a profession. Organizing and obtaining better conditions is a major challenge for them since, for example, 25 per cent of childcare workers work either part-time or as casuals in Australia (Goward, 2001).

Wage rates for child-care workers are even lower than average female wage rates, thus reinforcing the gender gap in earnings. The move away from public to private services in care in many countries, with the state having more of a managerial than a providing role, means that women benefit less from the wage margin of public-sector employment and national wage determination for public-sector workers.

Specific to domestic workers, the majority of them tend to work longer hours for low pay. A recent survey of the legislation in more than 60 countries found that 19 countries have enacted specific laws or regulations dealing with domestic workers and another 19 have devoted specific chapters or sections. The result is that domestic workers are afforded a lower level of protection than other workers and tend, by law, to have longer hours of work (Ramirez-Machado, 2003). Granting domestic workers the same basic labour rights that are afforded to other workers by legislation could be a first step in improving their conditions. Unionization of domestic workers is a way for them to increase their bargaining power and improve their conditions of work (for example, union action in Bangladesh and South Africa).

Female migration in this context has significant impacts both in the South and the North. In the receiving countries, the employment of female immigrants represents an individual household’s solution to the needs of balancing family and labour market work. To the extent that many households fall back on this solution, it contributes to the privatization of social reproduction prevailing under global neoliberalism. This solution is open to families that can afford the corresponding costs, but leaves lower income households without solutions to the problems of balancing paid and unpaid work. Thus, it might tend to decrease social pressures to find collective solutions to the crisis of care. In the South, the need to balance paid and unpaid work shifts from the women who migrate to the individuals who replace them. In the case of mothers leaving their children behind, studies show that it’s mostly women who replace them, even in cases when fathers assume responsibility, and this includes especially close relatives or female extended kin. Policy must address their needs urgently.

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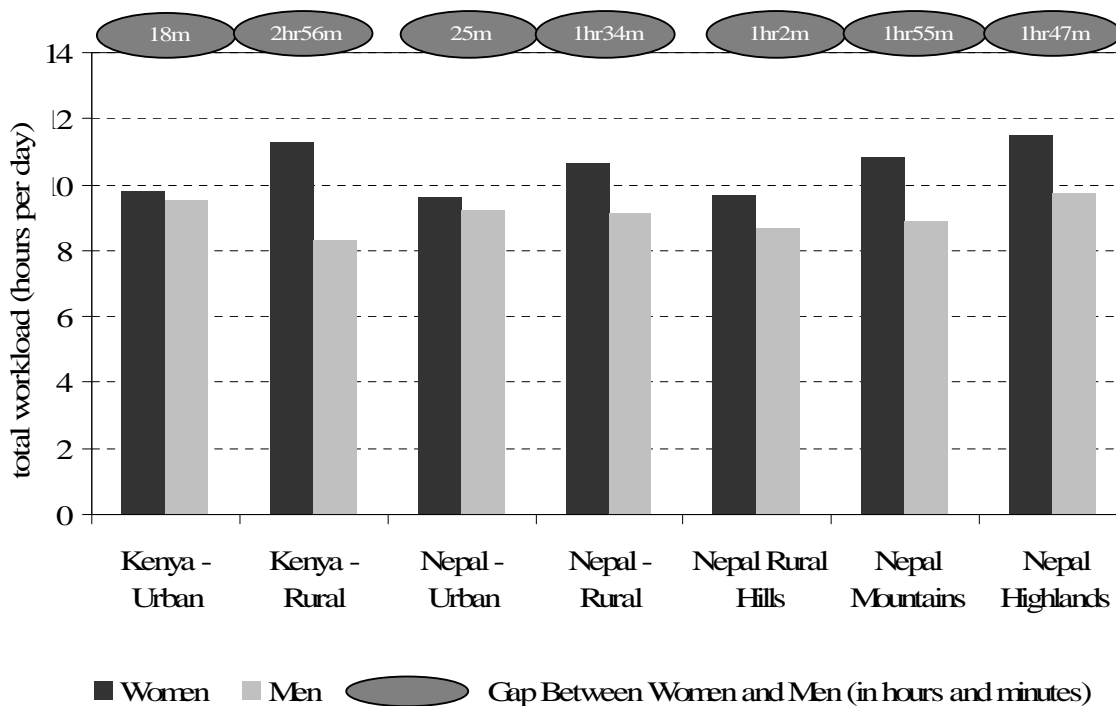
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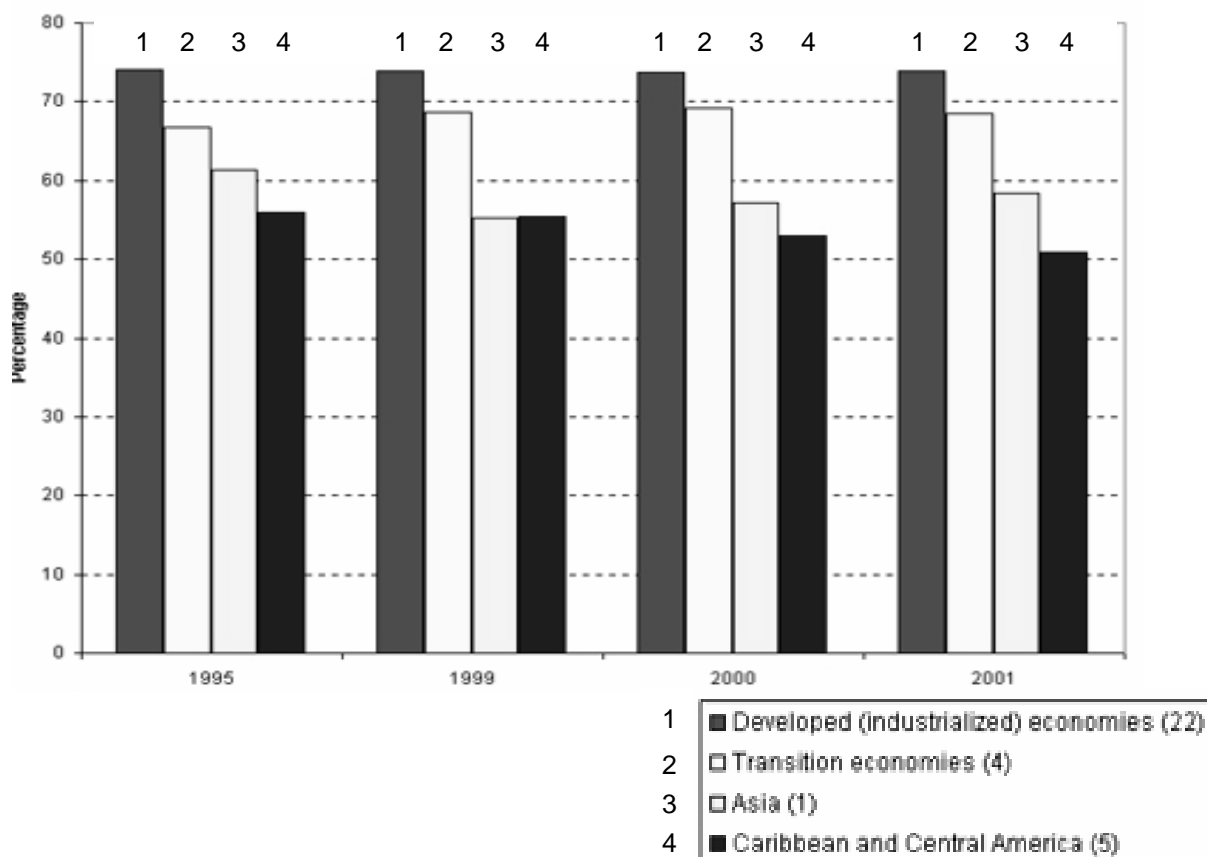
# Appendix

## Additional tables and figures

**Figure A-1. Total workload – urban/rural**

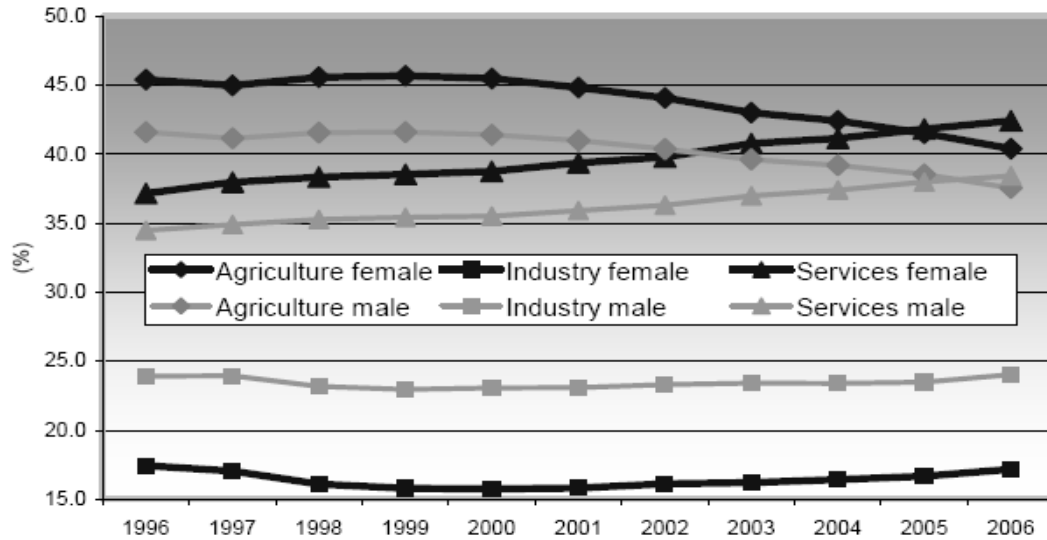


**Figure A-2. Female share of part-time employment, regional averages, 1995–2001**





**Figure A-3. Sectoral employment shares by sex, 1996–2006**



Source: Adopted from ILO, Global Employment Trends for Women (2007)

**Table A-1. Male and female status of employment, 1996 and 2006 (extended version)**

	Wage and salaried workers				Employers			
	1996		2006		1996		2006	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
World	42.9	45.7	47.9	49.2	1.5	3.8	1.4	3.3
Developed economies and European Union	86.7	81.9	89.5	83.1	3.4	6.9	3.0	6.9
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	78.5	76.5	79.0	76.2	0.5	2.6	0.8	2.9
East Asia	31.4	42.1	40.8	48.7	1.1	2.9	0.8	1.5
South East Asia and the Pacific	28.8	37.6	34.9	41.4	1.0	3.1	1.0	2.6
South Asia	10.3	19.5	15.3	27.2	0.5	2.3	0.4	1.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	66.6	59.3	67.5	60.7	2.0	5.0	1.7	4.4
Middle East and North Africa	47.5	52.2	56.2	55.4	2.4	9.7	4.1	11.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	13.8	26.8	17.0	29.5	1.1	2.7	1.4	2.7

	Own-account workers				Contributing family workers			
	1996		2006		1996		2006	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
World	22.4	34.7	25.7	35.9	33.2	15.8	25.1	11.6
Developed economies and European Union	6.4	10.2	5.4	9.3	3.5	1.0	2.1	0.7
Central and Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	10.2	15.8	12.4	17.5	10.8	5.1	7.8	3.4
East Asia	28.7	34.7	37.4	37.0	38.8	20.4	20.9	12.8
South East Asia and the Pacific	22.9	41.2	27.1	41.4	47.2	18.1	37.1	14.6
South Asia	16.3	55.8	21.7	55.2	72.8	22.4	62.6	16.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	24.2	29.5	25.6	31.1	7.2	6.2	5.1	3.7
Middle East and North Africa	17.1	23.4	11.3	21.2	33.0	14.7	28.4	11.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	49.0	43.6	42.3	44.4	36.2	27.0	39.3	23.3

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends for Women (2007), table 5.



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